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THE

MINUTES

OF THE

CHRISTIAN ANTI-SLAVERY CONVENTION.

ASSEMBLED APRIL 17th–20th, 1850

CINCINNATI, OHIO.

BEN FRANKLIN BOOK AND JOB ROOMS, WALNUT STREET ABOVE PEARL.

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CALL FOR A

CHRISTIAN ANTI-SLAVERY CONVENTION.

The undersigned, having been constituted a Committee for the purpose of calling a Convention of Christians, to consider upon the connection of the American Church with the sin of Slaveholding, do hereby invite our fellow-christians, of all denominations, to assemble in convention at Cincinnati, on the Third Wednesday in April next, to deliberate upon this important subject, and to adopt such measures as the Convention may, in its wisdom devise, for freeing the American Israel from this sin.

Among the many reasons which, in the opinion of the undersigned, render such a Convention desirable, we would mention the following:—

1. The guilt of a wrong action is proportioned to the light and knowledge against which it is committed; and God, having, by His Providene fully revealed, through experience and discussions, the sinfulness of Slaveholding, the Church has no longer a cloak or excuse for continuing therein. These are not the days of ignorance, in which the sin can be winked at, but all men, everywhere, are called upon to repent and forsake it.

2. The injurious influence of a sin in the Church, becomes greater when it particularly attracts the attention of the world. Slaveholding has now drawn upon itself the observation of all men, and so universal has been the condemnation of the practice, that even the semi-barbarian refuses to tolerate what a portion of the American Church cherishes as a part of the Christian system, and thus the Gospel is evil spoken of, and its progress hindered at home and abroad.

3. We believe the influence of the Church to be so great, that no earthly power can destroy this sin, while, as now, it finds countenance and protection among the professed people of God; and that nothing can save it from speedy ruin so soon as the Church shall withdraw her support.

4. It has become a question of grave import, with a large number of Christians, wheather each member of an organized body is not held responsible by God for the sin of the organization of which he VOLUNTARILY forms a part; and it is believed that a public and free interchange of opinions upon this point, would produce a salutary effect upon the minds of hundreds of inquiring Christians.

5. A large body of American professors, influential from their numbers, wealth, and social rank, have deliberately chosen and publicly declared their position: They enshrine slaveholding in the church, and cherish and defend it as a practice agreeable to the spirit of the Gospel. To a body of Christians, large already, and daily increasing, it is a very solemn question, wheher silence and inaction on the part of other portions of the church, do not give consent to these pro-slavery principles, and whether this consent does not make the sin ours, by adoption, and involve us in the consequences.

We, therefore, earnestly request our Fellow-Christians, of all Denominations, to whom this Circular is sent, to obtain for it, as soon as may be, the names of such brethren as are friendly to the object, and return them to the Chairman of the Committee, at Cincinnati, on or before the first day of March next.

B. P. AYDELOTT,
WM. HENRY BRISBANE,
S. C. STEVENS,
A. BENTON,
JOSEPH T. LEWIS,
SAMUEL LEWIS,
E. GOODMAN,
S. H. CHASE,
M. C. WILLIAMS,
LEVI COFFIN,
JAMES C. WHITE,
JONATHAN CABLE,

CHARLES B. BOYNTON, Chairman.

Cincinnati, Nov. 20, 1849.

INTRODUCTORY SERMON.

The foregoing invitation was responded to by sending to the Committee the names of about two thousand persons, who stated their warm approval of the proposed Convention, and on the appointed day a large number of delegates assembled in the Vine Street Congregational Church, and by unanimous consent agreed to spend the whole of the preliminary session in devotional exercises, and in special prayer for the blessing of God upon the doings of the Convention.

It was felt by all that the influences of the Holy Spirit were granted unto the assembly, and the delightful spirit of union and brotherly love which there seemed to pervade all breasts was not lost during all the sittings of the Convention.

Rev. C. B. Boynton, of Cincinnati, having been invited by the Convention to preach a sermon, delivered the following discourse in the evening, before a large and attentive audience:

1 Peter ii, 9.

"But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light."

The translation of this passage is inferior to the original, both in precision and power; and yet, as a translation it can scarcely be improved. By a very brief explanation, however, perhaps the exact thought of the Apostle may be more clearly presented. The phrase translated "*peculiar people*," means "a people for a possession," God's possession, and the idea of Peter, in the phrase translated "show forth the praises of him," seems rather to be, "that ye should show forth the character of God, and his works which demand our praise." We might read then, "a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, the peculiar possession of God, that ye should show forth in yourselves, the character and works of him," &c.

I think there is not in the whole Bible, a more clear, concise and forcible statement of the nature, design and duties of the Church of Christ, than this passage in the original presents. It has the precision of a definition. Such passages are the guiding lights which God hangs up along the path of the Church, when the world's darkness presses close upon her like the wall of waters on either side of the columns of Israel. They are to the Church what the compass and sun, and stars and headlands, are to the mariner, in the directing of his vessel.

Amid the present conflict of opinions, as to what the Church is, or ought to be, what part God has assigned to her in the world's great battle; or whether she is to remain quiet in camp, with a mere creed hung out for a banner; it is not strange if she should be somewhat bewildered in regard to her true character, relations, and duties.

At one time the Church is charged with wandering beyond her appropriate sphere, with attacking sins over which she has no jurisdiction, violating the reserved rights of Satan; at another, she is accused of having forsaken the world, of having stricken down her lights, and of leaving the struggling millions to grope, and fall, in the darkness alone.

The world, like the Israelites when Moses tarried in the Mount, exclaims: "as for this Church we know not what has become of her; let us make to ourselves gods which shall lead us on to the goal of humanity."

A new race of gods has been begotten in these last days, numerous as those of Rome, and for a time, and by many, devoutly believed in. They are the false Christs of the age, who propose to cleanse the corruption of man, without the blood of the atonement, to create him anew, or make him as good as new, without the renewing of the Holy Ghost; a scheme to beautify society by arraying in a more gorgeous robe the old body of sin, a new patent whitewash wherewith to adorn the sepulchre.

These things have aroused the Church, and constrained her to examine anew her commission and her duties; and the idea is forcing itself upon her attention, that the reformation of society, as well as the conversion of the individual soul, is her peculiar mission; and that to accomplish this, her work, a judgment, a discriminating, separating process, must begin at the very sanctuary of God, that the world's physician must first of all heal himself.

Thousands have meditations like these. The Church is bound under God to reform the world. But her power to recover society is in direct proportion to the holiness of her heart, and the purity of her practice. The world cannot be advanced a step through her, until she has parted company with sin, and stands herself on a higher level, separate and peculiar.

They believe that the purification of the Church must precede the reformation of the world, that the Holy Spirit must come to sit as a refiner to purge the dross of her sins away, until the clear, pure metal shall give back a bright and distinct reflection of the lineaments of Christ.

Separation from sin, a renewed, and entire consecration to God as the only source of power in the Church, and the only hope of reform for the world; these ideas originated the call for this Convention, and these have dictated the response which far and wide has been given to our invitation.

In the discussion upon which I have entered, it will be necessary to deal as much as may be with elementary principles; to consider things if possible, in their essence, and for this purpose let us turn our attention to the question, "what is a Christian?" The derivation of the word directs us at once to The Christ, "The Anointed One." The anointing of the Priest or Magistrate was a part of the consecrating

rite, by which he was separated from all other pursuits, and set apart, and devoted wholly unto the special duties of his office. The external anointing was the symbol of the inner baptism by which God was supposed to confer the intellectual and moral qualifications for office.

By the anointing of the Holy Ghost, the Son of God was prepared for, and set wholly apart unto the work of redemption, he was dedicated without reserve unto his official duties; these henceforth formed his exclusive occupation; he was separated from all things else, and absorbed in these alone,—He, The Anointed Priest and King.

The Christ-men, then, are necessarily like their model and leader; the consecrated and anointed ones, the Christ-ones—a chosen band, called out of and separated from the world; and by the baptism of the Holy Spirit, anointed for, and consecrated to, the special work of God—as truly set apart and called, as Christ himself was, a chosen generation, a holy nation, a peculiar people, the possession of God. This serves to explain another remarkable expression of our text, "royal priesthood," as applied to the Church, the body of Christ-ones. By the high calling of God in Christ Jesus, each follower of the Son of God is elected to the Christian priesthood, and by the anointing of the Holy Spirit is separated from the world, inducted into the most holy office, and becomes thus a member of a consecrated class, a priesthood which is royal, because the Prince Royal of the Universe, the Only Son and Sole Heir of God, is the Head and High Priest of the order; and because each Christian follows Christ in the new birth, is born as he was by the overshadowing of the Holy Spirit, is literally brother or sister of his, and therefore a member of the new royal household of which Jesus is head.

These facts enable us to grasp the very thing which constitutes a Christian, which distinguishes him from every other order of being. Christ is the head of the new family, the first begotten of a new spiritual race, the second Adam. He is a *man*, who is born in the likeness of the first Adam, the type of the human species. He is a *Christian*, who is born again in the likeness of Christ, the Second Adam, the type, the model of the Christian species, the new family and order begun in Him. He is not a man who does not exhibit the distinctive features of humanity; who agrees not with the model of the species; and he is not a *Christian*, who possesses not the peculiar, essential characteristics of the new nature and order of being, of which Christ is the beginning, the type and head.

We are also enabled by this reasoning to separate the idea of the Church from every thing extraneous and non-essential; we strip off the wrappage of forms, and sects, and organizations; we see what lies back of all these, what existed before these, that *something*, which would exist still, and be the Church of Christ still, though all these were abolished and swept utterly away.

The Church, the Ecclesia, the chosen body, is composed of *Christ-men*, of anointed ones, separated from the world and consecrated unto a peculiar calling, the high calling of the Christian priesthood. The Church is *literally*, not figuratively, a sacred order of priests, following the character of the Royal High Priest, Jesus Christ Himself—as truly consecrated unto and anointed for the office, as was Aaron to the priestly office under the Jewish law. I remark, in passing,

that in the distinctive, unchangeable, universal Christian type, we have a true and tangible basis for one, united, Catholic Church, one vitally connected body of Jesus. The Church, then, is a brotherhood of Christian priests, set apart to the holy ministry of the gospel, with no sacred order *within* or *above* the general body, and with no distinctions except those arising from occupation and office. "For one is your Master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren."

Having thus endeavored to set forth the elementary idea both of a Christian and the Church, we are prepared for the question, "what is the design and mission of the Church?"

I propose not to speak in detail of her different duties, but to comprise if possible, and sum them all up, in one general statement, and this I think is found in the language of the text: "Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people;" for what purpose? "That ye should shew forth the praises of Him, who hath called you out of the darkness into his marvellous light."

This, then, is the high and holy mission of the Church in the world, embracing, it is true, many particulars, but all bound up in one principle; an exhibition of the character of God. She is to be the representative of Christ, his witness on earth, the mirror in which the world may gaze and behold the lineaments of the Son of God. Here we reach, necessarily and instantly, a conclusion which is of special interest and importance in our future deliberations.

The moment any Church takes any sin into connection with herself, or cherishes, or defends, or even fails to rebuke and denounce it, whatever its character, and wherever found, she becomes an unfaithful representative of Christ; she bears false witness of God; she is a deceitful mirror; she dishonors Jesus by giving to the world a false impression of His character. Instead of shewing forth the praises of God, she exhibits Him as worthy of reproach, and she holds up the Immaculate God, as one in communion with sin. God is infinitely holy, and for the Church, while standing as His commissioned representative, and personating his character, to patronize or fellowship, and so approve of any sin, is to forge a character for God and palm it on the world for the true; 'tis a slander of Jesus, a libel against the Almighty. The Church, then, by her very nature and office, is solemnly bound to be as Jesus was, not only without sin herself, but also to hold herself separate from sinners, lest she be found bearing false witness against God.

The Church, then, is under a solemn obligation, springing out of the very law of her being, to refuse all connection between herself and sin, and to bear against it the whole weight of her testimony. She finds no warrant in the practice of her Great Exemplar, nor in the principles he advocated, for any half-way covenant with sin, much less for receiving it into full communion. No, nor for any timid or prudent scheme of temporizing policy. "Be ye holy, for I am holy," is a commission which bears with the whole authority of God against every feature of the accommodation plan of spreading abroad the gospel. It was tried by the Jesuits in their attempt to interweave Christianity with Buddism, hoping thereby to win the millions of the East without offending their prejudices; it was tried in our own forests, where the Indians were taught to regard Christ as an

unconquerable brave, to gain the admiration of the warrior; and I know not which the Savior may consider the more atrocious insult to his character, the representing him with his tomahawk upon the war-path in pursuit of the red man, or as approving and holding fellowship through his Church with a system which legalizes, and christianizes, the more savage, more heartless hunt of the black man, with the rifle and bloodhound. Christ is the model teacher of his system; his method of course is based upon a correct philosophy—and trusted not his cause to the proposition of a naked theory, but struck at the particular sins of his age and nation, sparing neither ecclesiastical, political, or social iniquity. His eye saw sin in all its enormity through the sheen of jewels and gold,—his courage faultered not, when it was hedged round with the defences of wealth, rank and power, or cherished among the religious prejudices of his countrymen. He hesitated not because he was denounced as a fanatic, and madman, a mischievous disturber of the peace of society. He ceased not, because of the agitation which his teachings produced; he directed his solemn admonition against every sin; but still, he kindled the hottest fires of indignation, and waked the most terrific storm of his wrath, when he denounced the haughty ecclesiastic, the self-conceited ruler, or the *organic sins* of his church and nation. In all this, he acted as the model preacher of his gospel, and the spirit of his whole ministry breathes forth in the solemn command, "Be ye holy, for I am holy."

This thought brings me to another proposition, (viz:) The Church is bound to make a discrimination in her testimony against, and warfare with sin. She is to observe and follow the Providence of God, and to single out as the chief object of her attack, that which He has brought most distinctly and prominently before the public eye.

Here, as pointing to one of the reasons for this assembly, we ask what sin has ever before in all the history of the earth stood forth in such hideous relief as slaveholding now does? toward what other iniquity of man has the world's thought been directed with such intensity of condemnation?

Now, when other nations, christian and infidel, civilized and uncivilized, have cast this system from them as a thing accursed of God and abhorred by men,—when governments which many Americans execrate as despotic, have broken the fetters of the slave, and have repudiated the idea of property in man; when from broad continents and clustering islands has been sent up the shout of deliverance, as the voice of many waters, the birth-hymn of millions born back from the sphere of brutes, into the world of humanity,—not only is there no glad response, sent back from this boasted, special home of Freedom, but remonstrance instead, and fierce defiance of the world's opinion, and the power of a contrary example. American Liberty declares that the perpetual enslaving of millions, more or less, according to power and opportunity, *is right;* she defends it with the national wealth, and hoists over it our national banner; while the Church undertakes to give the system a Christian baptism, places it in covenant with God, writes upon it the name of Immanuel, and offers to it the symbols of the Redeemer's body. Therefore it is, that the whole weight of the world's remonstrance and reproach is laid upon our own

country; and here, moreover, it is gathered and condensed again and hurled upon the Church,—that Church of which we form a part. The blackness of this iniquity settles upon us, on us fall the odium and the scorn; into our own souls does the bitterness enter,—and we feel that in our present position we participate in the crime, and are linked to our portion of coming retribution.

We think that God has thus by his Providence singled out the system of American slavery as *the sin* of the country and of the Church, against which Christians are called upon to direct the power of truth, the influence of example, and the force of Christian rebuke, and therefore it is that we are here to propose, discuss, and as I hope adopt, some plan by which our duty may be done.

It may perhaps be deemed by the Convention a mere wasting of time, a work of supererogation, to devote a moment to the question, is slaveholding a sin? Yet we may not safely overlook the fact, that the affirmative, that it is a sin, is met by instant denial, not alone by the slaveholder, from whom we should naturally expect it; not alone by churches at the South reared and sustained in part by slave labor, and the price of men bred like brutes for the market; not alone from politicians, with whom slavery is only an element in party combinations, a mere instrument of party warfare; but we must remember that no main branch of the Northern Church, through any body representing i s *general voice*, has as yet declared American Slavery a sin which ought to be denounced as such, and excluded from the church. No General Assembly or General Conference or General Association, has uttered a clear, unequivocal verdict against it as a *sin*, to be dealt with as such.

However clear and strong, then, the convictions of our own minds may be, we may not deceive ourselves with the idea that the *Northern* Church even is ready to respond.

The subject is hedged round by such a clamorous host of prejudices as never rallied to the support of sin before, and protected by such powerful interests as never before formed the body guard of iniquity. It has run its dark and bloody thread through the whole web of society; it is part and parcel of the whole social and political frame-work. The banking, manufacturing, and commercial capital, the hopes of political aspirants, the places of twenty thousand government officers, the success of colleges and theological seminaries, of our own mission boards, and other benevolent movements; of our literature, our religious and secular newspapers; the popularity of professors and presidents of our seminaries, the hopes of ministers themselves; all these are thought to be endangered by the agitation which truth will produce; hence every where, movement is condemned, discussion is frowned upon, earnestness is ridiculed, and feeling is repressed.

For this reason, the fact that slaveholding is a sin, foul and damning, and the arguments which prove the assertion true, ought continually to be pressed upon the public thought. Still, though such appalling difficulties press now upon the Christian reformer, there is no need for despondency, but much, rather, to inspire with hope. Though it is mournfully true, that what I have stated is the general position even of the Church of God, even at the North, there are thousands of Christians within the different communions, whose prin-

ciples are sound, whose hearts are right, and whose courage is equal to the crisis. Could we, through wisdom from on high, devise some plan by which the power of these could be united in concerted, harmonious action, we might even here raise the shout of victory, before the battle begins.

It is not my purpose to detain the Convention with an attempt at formal argument on the sinfulness of slaveholding ; I have no hairs to split, nor microscopic examinations to make around the question of "sin per se." That subject will be discussed by others. The question I propose, refers to the huge *system* of American Slavery, its character, workings, and results. *Is that wrong?* is a man sinful in upholding that ? or is it a spotless and holy thing approved by Christ, and welcomed to his fellowship ? Permit me to make a few suggestions. The Slave trader from Cuba or Brazil, moors his ship on the African coast, and purchases his cargo of Slaves. There, and thus, the act is esteemed most horrible ; one voice of execration is raised against the attrocious outrage, and by the common consent of civilized man, he is hunted down as a felon, a pirate. Buyer and seller are cast together out of the pale of humanity, overwhelmned by a common condemnation. But the Slave trader from Texas or Louisiana opens his mart and establishes his jail, and purchases his handcuffs in the Capitol of the U. States, and collects his gang from the human pasture grounds of Virginia and the Carolinas—tears mother and child asunder, breaks up the conjugal relation, scoffs at wailing and tears ; and yet, alas ! who is wise enough to decide whether *this* deserves the name of sin either in sellers or buyers. What was most clear to all eyes and all minds on the African coast, has become a most knotty question, when transferred to American soil, most difficult of solution. Learned Doctors of Divinity and Theological Professors must hold their opinion in suspense till they have examined anew Hebrew and Greek Lexicons ; Ministers and Churches look grave, perplexed with doubt ; General Assemblies appoint from year to year Committees who can reach no satisfactory conclusion ; Mission Boards take at least 13 years to consider and are still in profound thought, doubtful which way the scales of decision may finally incline. The man *here*, who should commit adultery, and hold the fruit of his crime as a slave, or sell her for infamous purposes, would be shunned as a monster ; and he would be deemed a madman who should propose such an one for the fellowship of the Churches, but when this self same enormity is entrenched in a mighty system—becomes part and parcel of a civil and social structure, and thus a thousand fold more influential for evil—then *he* is the madman who refuses to countenance it and extend the wing of the Church over the wholesale wickedness. And churches, and ministers, statesmen, judges, and professors, and annual profoundly deliberating committees, cannot certainly determine that it should be called by the name of sin. Is murder a sin ? The system tolerates murder. How many graves cover the murdered victims of passion or malice. slain when there was none to help or punish. How many skeletons bleach in Southern swamps and forests, where the blood hound and the rifle stilled the aspirations of hearts, beating, hoping and struggling for freedom ? On the northern banks of the Ohio, this would be a fearful sin ; why, then, on the southern shore, do we pronounce legal and

christian, a system of which such atrocities form an essential part? Is it a sin to trample down beyond recovery, the family institution, to violate as a rule, and by settled policy, the marriage tie, to do it coolly as a profitable speculation? This is one of the peculiar features of the system, without which it cannot exist. In the free states this would exclude a man from all association with respectable men. In the south the human cattle breeder sits down unrebuked at the table of Christ. Is it a sin to overpower a man by superior force, bend him wholly to my own purposes, against his wishes, to the destruction of his hopes and happiness, and if he resists, put him to death? Let us remember that the guilt is the same, whether we *originate* this outrage on the coast of Africa, or perpetuate and sanction it here.

In one portion of the country, this would be an infamous crime, but, if we only pass some natural boundary, or even an imaginary line, the crime is transformed into an unobjectionable transaction, an act so pure and heavenly that it cannot stain the spotless robe of Christ.

On one side of a landmark established by human caprice or self interest, it would be an insufferable enormity to train up a child, whether my own, or acquired by force, or fraud, or purchase, in such degradation and ignorance of his rights and duties, that his dwarfed mind should be unable to conceive of any higher object than to be my servile tool, on a level with my horse or dog, so that he should never come to any right understanding of what is due to himself, to me, or to God.

But let me remove only one foot's distance on the other side of that boundary, and it becomes righteous and Christlike to treat in this very manner, the children of three millions of my countrymen—to draw the expunging line of human legislation across the Godgiven charter of their rights, and to transform them by the infernal sorcery of mammon to human animals, with just enough of understanding to make them profitable machines. Let us turn to another feature of this subject.

The great heart of christendom has scarcely ceased from its wild pulsations, first of indignation and then of joy, at a late transaction in Italy: A protestant brother is seized and thrown into prison by the power of a municipal law resting upon the same authority as our own legislation, (though claiming a far higher,) and Europe and America ring with denunciations of the outrage, and when he sets at nought the law that binds him, and becomes a successful fugitive from bondage, scarce can protestant millions refrain from startling the heavens with one universal shout of joy. But suppose we turn to some American, while his tongue yet quivers with murmured thanksgivings for the release of the Italian; and say *your* prisoner held by *your municipal* law, has escaped and urges his flight by the rays of the northern star; and ho! for the rifle and blood hound, the bowie knife and the pistol, and away for the northern border. He must dash across the Ohio, make a foray into the consecrated grounds of Freedom, scour the country with "posse cimitatus," and if purchance he seize the trembling, panting, despairing fugitive, put on the handcuffs and the chain, ply him with the lash, or shoot him if he resist; and grave northern Senators exclaim, "oh righteous law! it will save the Union," and Churches crowd round and say, come with us brother let us take sweet counsel together as we go up to the Sanctuary of God, let us celebrate together the dying love of our Savior.

The Bey of Algiers once had a law, *the Constitution* of his State ; by which men, women and children swooped up on the high seas, by his Corsairs, were held as slaves. Women escaped from his power, whose children are now among us dwelling in safety.

What treatment would a demand from him for the restoration of his fugitives receive ? Some of our Indian tribes are similarly situated. They made captives and slaves among the whites as lawfully as any negro has been acquired on the coast of Africa, or by purchase, or *breeding* on our own soil. Let these tribes make a demand upon our Congress for the children of those who have escaped, and how long think you would it be, before some regiments of mounted riflemen would remove them, not from without the limits of the States, but from time into eternity.

Now he who sustains such a *system*, virtually gives his sanction to each particular atrocity which helps to make the whole ; and I ask my christian brethren, here and elsewhere, of what other sin can I be guilty whose nature is so deadly, whose influence is so wide and terrific, as giving countenance to that which confounds all distinction between right and wrong, which annihilates God's standard of an intrinsic and eternal righteousness,—which makes justice depend upon lines of latitude, or human interest, or caprice, and thus unsettles all fixed rule of action, and subverts the very basis of society. The commission of any single crime against law, however heinous, is really trifling in comparison. I may commit murder, and still leave all the solemn standards of righteousness untouched ; nay, by expiating my crime, possibly the moral pulse of community may beat with healthier action than before. But if I publish opinions or sustain practices, by which I create a doubt as to whether murder is right or wrong, and confound mens ideas as to what murder truly is, I have unsealed a fountain of death, whose final breadth of stream, and force of current, and far reaching flow, nor man, nor angel can calculate.

If I violate the marriage tie, the scorn and rebuke of a right minded community more than counterbalance the influence of my iniquitous example, and the great standard of right is not swerved from its perpendicular ; but if I create, perpetuate, defend, or in any way countenance a system which vitiates the public morals, which benumbs the delicate sensibilities of woman, which weakens or removes the external or internal defences that shield her honor, then have I corrupted all society, and pushed it onward to the verge of hell.

These are not only appalling facts connected with slaveholding, but they are perfect illustrations of the principles of its workings.

The moral sensibilities of the church have been benumbed by this confounding of right and wrong—this legerdemain by which what is wrong on one side of an imaginary line, becomes instantly right, when transferred to the other, making God's eternal standard, and consequently his own character, a thing of circumstance and change.

It has checked the flow of her spiritual life, by a most natural consequence, and has dimmed her perception of sin by an inviolable law.

When the eye is turned full on the Sun, the excess of stimulus renders it insensible to a lesser light, and the nearest objects become invisible. So, when conscience has been educated to approve of a

great wrong—its capacity for resistance is exhausted, and the lesser brood of sins passes unquestioned and unheeded.

Most truly, then, may we attribute the present apathy of the church in regard to all reform, the patient forbearance with a host of sins that spot her imperial robe, to the fact that in fraternizing the most enormous wrong of our country, in gazing approvingly upon its gorgon features her spiritual vision is obscured, and she cannot now perceive the smaller sins until her eye is anointed of Jesus and couched and cleared by the Spirit of God.

If it be answered as it sometimes is, these things which you have mentioned, are sins by common consent, and you make a false issue, these are sins, but they form no necessary part of the system,—I reply, cut off then these acknowledged sins, abuses of the system; *call them sins,* rebuke them as such, withhold fellowship from all who practice them. Set the seal of reprobation *thus,* upon slaveholding and slave-breeding, upon adultery and concubinage, repudiate the idea of property in man, punish the murderer of the slave, protect him from cruelty, insist that he is a *man,* not a *thing,* educate and give him the gospel, lop off these abuses, and a grave a span long would hold the remains of the system. But I must turn to other considerations. Why propose this new experiment of assembling Evangelical Christians? Why appeal exclusively to the Church? (1) Because she is the great, the almost sole effectual defender of this wrong. Her moral power is so mighty, so wide spread, that simple inaction on her part, affords a protection which could not be given by the joint power of all the political parties; no, nor by the world, though ranging round it the living walls of her soldiery. The church by her apathy, is diminishing and periling her influence, but it is still an incalculable force and upon the principle that "he who is not with me is against me," this whole power is thrown against the emancipation of the slave, against even the free inquiry whether it is right or wrong—and in, favor of every outrage which slaveholding involves.

(2.) Because this question in its primary and most important aspect belongs, not to politics, but to morals. Political action can have no natural connection with it except to carry out by appropriate legal forms a previous moral decision; and this prerequisite settlement belongs to the church, and can be made by none but her.

To attempt to arrange this great moral question by mere party political legislation, is as idle as it was for France to apply her political power to the being of God and the counsels of his will.

The question which regards slaveholding is a *moral issue,* and can no more be determined by mere Congressional Enactment, than the question what a man shall believe and what the nature of his emotions shall be, can be decided thus. The ages have been witnesses of this experiment, and neither the authority of councils, nor the power of monarchs, nor parliamentary statutes, nor starchamber courts, nor inquisitions, nor dungeons, nor death, have availed to settle the question of Eternal right. Political parties may employ this question as loaded dice, wherewith to play at presidential stakes. States may puff themselves up with swellings of indignation, may threaten to secede and leave the twelve millions of the North to die of grief and starvation; and Senators suddenly seized with severest par-

oxism of patriotism, may throw themselves into the "imminent deadly breach," and magnanimously save the Union, and their own political hopes at the same time; and this great question be buried in some huge tomb of compromise; and before the funeral ceremony is over, it will rise again, and the bosoms of thousands be fired anew by the momentous issue it presents.

This question must be discussed by the church, and by the church the problem must be solved, or it will remain a riddle forever.

(3.) We invite evangelical churches to these deliberations, because in the settled judgement of thousands, the fellowship of churches and christians with this wrong, is a true and literal partnership with iniquity. Each nation is one unit, is so regarded, and treated always, by God, by an unvarying principle of his Government. The official sin of the rulers, or lawful representatives of a nation, is visited upon the whole. Human law recognizes the same principle in holding each member of a partnership, responsible for all, and all for each. The whole business of society rests upon this, as one of the chief foundations. No church therefore can escape its application.

The Presbyterian churches, New and Old school, the Methodist, Episcopalian and some others; each claim to be one organic whole—they are so by constitution; and consequently each is bound by a chain of responsibility, a *partnership responsibility* which reaches to every individual member. The sin of a church then in fellowship with sin, cleaves to every individual member of the organization by a necessary law of association, and implication, recognized as just, alike, in heaven and on earth.

If this principle is admitted, then, there remains but one remedy for such an evil, after suitable remonstrance and rebuke, and that is, to sever the official tie which connects us with the erring body, that we be not partakers of her sin or her retribution. This is so perfectly apparent that it needs no proof.

But in order to meet the strict demands of our principle, the separation must be complete; every thread which binds us, the slenderest rootlet through which the organic life can be communicated, must be severed, or it will prove, first, a channel along which our influence flows out for the support of sin, and secondly a conductor, through which will come back to us the stroke of retribution. The principle if carried unshrinkingly to its conclusions, will not only separate us from every slaveholding, and slavery-sustaining church, but will equally divide us from all their official agencies, whatever, their name, nature or purposes. Nor does such action partake in any one of its features, of the nature of schism. Grant that a body is a sinning body, and it is also a wanderer, it has gone aside from the right ways of the Lord, it has itself divided from Jesus, has itself become schismatic, and to leave it and return to the side of Christ, is to be re-grafted into the parent vine, to be in *visible*, as well as spiritual union with the actual church. Human organizations are not the church. They infold her within their wrappings, and they sometimes greatly impede the freedom of her movements, strip her of her grace and power, and bring her to peril of suffocation, and should we change wholly their form, or even tear them all away, not only would the church still survive after all were gone, but perhaps we

should behold her not *unclothed* but *clothed upon* with new and heavenly garments which would reveal, not hide her beauty.

Brethren, if this convention is to result in any action, such as the hour demands, if it passes beyond the worse than empty show of speeches and resolutions, than a work most solemn, important and delicate is before us; a work that touches almost every interest of the complicated web of society, a work which if conscientiously engaged in, and persevereingly carried on, is linked to far reaching results.

We propose to separate ourselves from all official connection with a prominent sin, and then by some method (if by the wisdom of God one may be discovered) to combine our numbers and our influence, in order to carry on against this sin a common warfare. Let us look well to the motives that control us. Any thing short of a hungering and thirsting after increased holiness of heart, and purity of practice, a desire, for the honor of Christ, and the progress of his gospel, that the church should be purified from sin—should become the heritage of God, and the reflector of his character; motives lower than these will surely lead astray and ensure defeat.

Whatever we do, must be from a solemn conviction, that thus only, can we best reach some higher attainment in the christian life, that thus only can we abide in Christ be assimilated to him, and exhibit the gospel as the power of God unto the salvation of men—"Holiness to the Lord," must be written on our hearts, and be proclaimed in our practice. I have remarked that in the unchangeable universal christian type, *that something*, which constitutes a christian, which is alike independent of organizations and forms, we find the possibility of, and basis for, a Catholic christian union. The unity of the *Christian species* leads by necessary inference to the unity of the church —just as the unity of the human race proclaims the brotherhood of man. There is something by which we recognize a man independently altogether of national, or party connection—that something is the essential quality which constitutes the man—no matter where he was born, what sun shone upon his infancy or manhood, or under what form of government he was reared; he is still a man, to be owned and respected as such; so christian character and christian life are not dependent upon any thing external.

Suppose we could annihilate all organizations and all forms, then bring together one hundred individuals whose only distinguishing mark should be Christ formed within them the hope of glory. Would not *there* be a church, a portion of *the church*, with every thing essential to salvation; and then would not he be guilty of schism who should propose to separate from his brethren on account of a form. Then, they are seeking to reunite the scattered members of Jesus, who pass lightly by, and beyond the unessential form, and unite by the higher and holy affinity of a common love for Christ, by the heavenly attraction of a common holiness. Brethren it would be an achievement worthy, even of this age, it would meet a want now deeply felt by a multitude of earnest hearts, it would remove one grand error of Protestantism, if a church could be constituted separate from every tangible sin, whose bond of union should be no worn out sectarian lashings, but the same tie, which unites all in heaven into

one harmonious family, that spiritual affinity which springs from a common life in Christ and results in a mutual love. Three times in his parting supplication for his church, did the Savior pray that it might be one, and this union was to have such an outward manifestation as would be recognized and felt by the world, "that the world may believe"—certainly then we do but follow him when we desire, and pray, and labor that they who have a common Father, a common birth through the Holy Spirit, a common Redeemer, and the hope of a common heaven, should be visibly one in Christ. A baptism of the Spirit such as the exigency of this hour demands would melt us into one, would merge all distinctions in the absorbing fellowship by which through abiding in Christ, we are also members one of another. It would lead us all beyond the chilling outer court of forms where blow the winds of controversy, to the heart's "holy of holies," the inner sanctuary of the spiritual life.

Surely there can be nothing wrong in the wish that they who have for each other a spiritual affinity through a common life which is "hid with Christ in God," should become even *visibly* one family in him, a spiritual organism with a suitable outward embodiment, and that the followers of Jesus should reject all party distinctions and appellations, and readopt the original family name, that genuine and significant name of *christian*, which suggests at once their character and their origin.

MINUTES

OF THE

CHRISTIAN ANTI-SLAVERY CONVENTION.

The Christian Anti-Slavery Convention, assembled at 10 o'clock, April 17, 1850, in the Vine street Congregational Church.

Upon motion of the Chairman of the Committee issuing the call, Samuel Lewis, Esq., of the city of Cincinnati, was called to the chair, and the Rev. J. Cable and the Rev. James White, of Cincinnati, were appointed Secretaries, for the purpose of temporarily organizing the Convention.

Upon taking the chair, Mr. Lewis addressed the Convention.

Upon motion of Dr. S. H. Chase, the following committee was appointed to nominate permanent officers of the Convention, viz: Messrs. Chase, Harwood, Benton, Aydelotte, Foot, and Gaines.

Upon motion of Rev. James Milligan, of Illinois, the following committee upon Resolutions was appointed, viz: Messrs. Brisbane, Aydelotte, Stevens, Goodman, Frankland, Goodell, Lewis, Milligan.

Upon motion of Rev. W. H. Brisbane, the following resolutions were adopted:

Resolved, 1. The meetings of this Christian Anti-Slavery Convention shall be opened, by the announcement by the President, of an opportunity for any member of s of ches to lead in reading the Scriptures, and in prayer.

2. We recognize as legitimate, no other means for the promotion of the Anti-Slavery cause, than such as are in accordance with the Gospel of Peace.

3. We are pledged to conduct all the proceedings of this Convention with christian meekness, kindness, and seriousness; and if any member offend in any of these respects, he shall be immediately called to order.

4. The decorum of the proceedings shall be regulated according to the best established parliamentary usages.

The following resolution, offered by Rev. C. B. Boynton, was passed.

Resolved, That a committee, consisting of seven, from as many different religious denominations, be appointed upon business and devotional exercises.

The following were appointed upon this committee: Messrs. Boynton, Chase, Brisbane, Stevens, Humphries, and Rankin.

Upon motion of Rev. E. Goodman, the following committee were appointed to prepare an Address for the adoption of the Convention, viz: Messrs. Goodman, Nevin, Aydelotte, Whipple, Kenyon, and Vashon.

Upon motion, the following persons were appointed as a Committee of Ways and Means, viz: Benton, Freeman, Cable, McCullough, Heaton, Leavitt, and Williams.

A Committee upon enrollment of members was appointed, as follows: Messrs. Brown, Harker, and Chaffin.

The Convention then adjourned to meet again at 3 o'clock, P. M.

Wednesday, 3, *P. M.*

The Convention met in pursuance of adjournment. Opened with prayer by Thomas Frankland.

The Committee on Nominations reported as follows:

For President, Judge S. C. Stevens, of Madison, Indiana.

For Vice Presidents, Rev. B. P. Aydelotte, of Ohio; Rev. James Milligan, of Illinois; Rev. John G. Fee, of Kentucky; Rev. George Whipple, of New York; Rev. E. H. Nevin, of Ohio; Rev. E. Smith, of Ohio.

For Secretaries, Rev. M. N. Miles, of Illinois; Rev. C. B. Boynton, of Cincinnati; Rev. E. Matthews, of Wisconsin; and James Birney, Esq., of Cincinnati.

The report of the Committee on Nominations was accepted.

Judge S. C. Stevens asked leave to decline the nomination, but the Convention refused to grant his request.

The report, upon being put to vote, was adopted. Judge S. C. Stevens was thereupon welcomed to the chair, and introduced to the Convention by Samuel Lewis, Esq.

Letters addressed to the committee calling the convention, were then read, from Rev. Elnathan Pope, of Maine; Rev. P. Bailey, of East Berkshire, Vermont; Gerrit Smith, Esq., of New York; James G. Birney, Esq., of Michigan; Hon. H. B. Stanton, of New York; Hon. Wm. Jay, of New York; Rev. John Rankin, of Ripley, Ohio.

The reading of other letters in the hands of the comm[illegible]tponed.

The committee upon Resolutions, through their chair[illegible]ev. W. H. Brisbane, reported the following Preamble and Resolutions, the ninth of the series having been proposed by Rev. J. G. Fee, of Kentucky:

Whereas the Gospel was designed to promote the well-being of man, both temporally and spiritually; and Jesus Christ himself set forth not only the principles, but the mode of action by which the human race were to be benefitted, distinctly announcing that he came to preach the Gospel to the poor, to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, and to preach the acceptable year of the Lord; and also warned the world that he would judge all men by the deeds done in the body, with special reference to their treatment of the destitute and the oppressed; and that he fully enforced all this by his own example during his stay on earth; and whereas these principles of humanity and Christianity have been in a great measure lost sight of in the instructions of the *pulpit*, and in the example of *professed Christians* in these United States, especially in their application to those of our countrymen who are the descendants of Africans, whilst the

Churches themselves have for the most part treated this unfortunate portion of the human family, with great neglect, and often times with great disdain and contempt, many of their members holding these their brethren in abject servitude, and others cultivating a deep prejudice against the oppressed class, and freely fraternizing with their oppressors; and inasmuch as the consequence of this departure from the original principles of the Gospel tends to a yet lower standard of piety and Christian morality, and must, if persisted in, finally destroy all vital godliness in the Churches, and sink their religion into mere superstitious form, and impious rites and ceremonies; Therefore—

RESOLVED,

1. Slavery directly contravenes the laws of God, and the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and ought everywhere to be abolished.

2. American Slavery, as every other form of human chattleship, is a sin in itself, which can find no shelter either in the Patriarchal, Mosaic, or Christian dispensations; nor can any slaveholder be justified, under any possible circumstances, in retaining his fellow man in the condition of a slave, since no human laws can bind him to *exercise* ownership.

3. The professor of Christianity, who declines to give freedom to his slaves, gives evidence thereby, that he loves not the Lord Jesus Christ with his whole heart, since Jesus has himself taught, that inasmuch as we do a wrong to the least of those for whom he shed his blood, we do a wrong to him.

4. He who communes or has fellowship with the Slaveholder, communes and has fellowship with one who tramples upon the laws of God, and the principles and doctrines of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

5. The churches of the various denominations, and their judicatories, ought to decree such measures, and take such action, as are best adapted to deliver them from all participation in the sin and other evils of slaveholding.

6. We believe the moral power and general influence of the Church are such as, if rightly directed, would bring slavery to a speedy and peaceful end; and, therefore, until the Church be thus faithful in the use of the talents entrusted to her, she is fearfully guilty.

7. The slaves in our own country deserve the especial attention of American Christians and Churches; and, therefore, they who pass negligently and indifferently by the *Slave*, to send the Gospel to the *Pagan*, prove thereby their own disqualification for promulgating that Gospel.

8. Anti-Slavery members of churches ought to endeavor to induce their respective churches to take a distinct Anti-Slavery position.

9. The friends of a pure Christianity ought to separate themselves from all slaveholding churches, and from all churches, ecclesiastical bodies, and missionary organizations, that are not fully divorced from the sin of slaveholding; and we, who may still be in connection with such bodies, pledge ourselves, that we will, by the aid of Divine grace, conform our actions in accordance with this resolution, and come out from among them, unless such bodies shall speedily separate themselves from all support of, or fellowship with, slaveholding.

10. Ministers who neglect to pray for the abolition of slavery, and to preach against slavery, are recreant to the high duties of their commission.

11. Theological and other seminaries of learning which avoid the question of slavery, or give instruction conservative of slavery, ought not to have the support of any Christian community.

12. It is the obligation of ministers of the Gospel to instruct their congregations in the duties of citizens, of voters, of legislators, and of administrative and judicial officers of the civil government.

13. Christians have no moral right to help into office men who disregard the rights of any class of their fellow men.

14. All human constitutions and laws which contravene the laws of God,

are null and void; and to all such laws ought to be applied the apostolic principle—"We ought to obey God rather than men."

15. Geographical or sectional feelings are inconsistent with Christian character; and, therefore, the terms *North* and *South*, are not the proper terms to designate the distinction between pro-slavery and anti-slavery communicants; and pro-slavery churches at the North are not to be recognized as Christian churches any more than if located at the South.

16. It is the duty of all the churches to memoralize Congress to abolish the slave trade and slavery in the District of Columbia, and wheresoever it may exist within the jurisdiction of the United States Government.

17. Whilst we deeply sympathize with the colored population of the Southern States, we are not unmindful that the system of slavery also extends its oppressive influence over the non-slaveholding white population, in the curtailment of their political rights, and in their social and educational depression; and we feel assured that the breaking of the fetters of the slave, will also elevate the condition of the oppressed white man, whose poverty or whose conscience prevents him from becoming a slaveholder.

18. Whilst it is the duty of all Christian advocates of freedom to use all lawful measures to have this horrid, social, political and religious evil, slavery, removed, still our dependence must rest supremely upon the faithful promise of God: that for the oppression of the poor, for the sighing of the needy, He will arise.

The first of the series was then discussed, and the Convention was addressed by Messrs. Goodell, Lewis, Price, Smith, and Nevin. The further consideration of the resolutions was then postponed.

The Committee upon Business and Religious Exercises, reported in part, which was accepted, and laid upon the table until to-morrow morning.

Rev. C. B. Boynton offered the following resolution:

Resolved, that a Committee, consisting of seven, be appointed to consider upon some method of combining the Christian Anti-Slavery influence of the country.

Upon motion, it was referred to the Committee on Resolutions.

Upon motion of Rev. W. H. Brisbane, *Resolved*, that when the Convention adjourns, it will adjourn to meet to-morning at 9 o'clock.

The Convention adjourned.

Thursday Morning, April 18, 1850.

Convention met at 9 o'clock, A. M., Judge Stevens in the chair. The Scriptures were read by Rev. James Milligan, of Illinois. Prayer was offered by Rev. Professor E. H. Nevin, of Ohio.

The minutes having been read, the Committee on Resolutions reported the resolution proposed by Rev. C. B. Boynton, during the afternoon of yesterday. Upon motion it was adopted. The following persons were appointed as the Commitee: Messrs. Boynton, Fee, Nevin, Craven, Goodell, Sclosser, and Pettijohn.

Discussion of the resolutions resumed. Convention addressed by Rev. Dr. Brisbane, Dr. Wilson, Rev. E. Smith.

Adjourned until 3 o'clock, P. M.

Thursday Afternoon, 3 *o'clock.*

Convention opened with prayer, by Mr. Goodell, of New York.

Discussion of the resolutions resumed, in which Messrs. Goodell, Nevin, and Milligan, participated.

The first resolution was unanimously adopted.

Adjourned to meet at 9 o'clock, A. M., Friday.

Friday Morning, 9 *o'clock.*

Convention opened with prayer by the Rev. Archibald Kenyon. Minutes were read.

On motion of Dr. Chase, a committee was appointed to secure the services of a Reporter for the Convention.

On motion of Mr. Avery, Rev. C. B. Boynton was requested to place in the hands of the Committee of Publication, the sermon delivered by him on Wednesday evening last.

On motion of Rev. W. H. Brisbane,

Resolved, that we regard the press, whether religious or political in its character, as one of the most powerful influences which can be employed to form a correct public sentiment; and viewing slavery as inconsistent with the design of our republican institutions, and the spirit of Christianity, we rejoice to see any portion of the press arrayed in a Christian temper against it.

On motion of Rev. C. B. Boynton,

Resolved, that a committee of twelve be appointed, who, after the adjournment of this Convention, shall hold under consideration its general objects, with power to fill vacancies or add to their number, and to adopt such measures as, in their judgment, will best promote the adoption of our principles, and the accomplishment of our purposes. Also,

Resolved, that the committee above mentioned be requested to take measures for calling another General Convention, of the character of the present Convention, at such time and place as they may judge expedient.

Resolved, That this Convention recommend to Christian Reformers, in the different States, and in the several counties of each State, to hold State and county conventions of a similar character.

The committee was made to consist of the following, viz: Messrs. Boynton, Goodman, Benton, Brisbane, Lewis, Goodell, Nevin, Stephens, Fee, Whipple, Tappan, and Blanchard.

On motion, the order of the day—the discussion of the Resolutions—was postponed, and the resolution offered by Rev. J. G. Fee, of Kentucky, was taken up.

On motion, it was *Resolved*, that speakers hereafter be limited to fifteen minutes.

After remarks by Messrs. Brown and Smith, the Convention adjourned until 2 o'clock, P. M.

Friday Afternoon, 2 *o'clock.*

Convention opened with prayer by Rev. James Milligan, of Illinois.

Discussion of the order of the day resumed. The resolutions having been read in their order, the 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th, 10th, 12th, 13th, 14th, and 18th, were unanimously adopted.

On motion, the 17th resolution was reconsidered, amended and adopted.

The resolution offered by Mr. Fee was then considered, and remarks made by Messrs. Fee, Bushnell, Kenyon, Gregory, Nevin, Yancey, and Burroughs.

Adjourned to meet at 8 o'clock, A. M. Saturday.

Saturday Morning, *April* 20.

Convention opened with the reading of the Scriptures by the Rev. J. Milligan, and prayer by Rev. E. Matthews.

The minutes having been read, Judge Stevens, the President, announced that he was under the necessity of returning home; whereupon the Convention gave an expression of thanks for the dignity and affability with which the duties of the chair had been discharged.

Samuel Lewis, Esq., the temporary chairman, was, upon motion, elected President of the Convention.

Discussion of the resolutions resumed. Remarks were made by Messrs. Lumsden, Foote, Matthews, Danbaugh, Chase, Moore, and Whipple.

The Conventien then voted upon several amendments which had been proposed to the resolution offered by Mr. Fee, but they were all rejected; whereupon the original resolution was adopted.

It was then moved and passed, that the resolution as adopted, be substituted for the ninth of the regular series.

Adjourned.

Saturday Afternoon, 2 *o'clock.*

Convention opened with prayer by Rev. W. H. Brisbane.

Discussion of the resolutions resumed, and the remainder of the series adopted.

The Address was then read by the Chairman of the Committee, accepted and adopted. The same Committee was directed to furnish, in the form of notes to the Address, proofs of the connection of different denominations with slavery.

On motion of Mr. Whipple, Messrs. C. B. Boynton, James Birney, W. H. Brisbane, and S. H. Chase, were added to the committee, to act instead of those who reside at a distance.

The names of different individuals from whom letters had been received, sympathizing with the objects of the Convention, were then read. It was also mentioned, that more than two thousand signers had been obtained to the call for the Convention.

On motion of J. B. Vashon, Esq., it was *Resolved*, that we believe that the American Colonization Society is a twin sister to Slavery, and has done

incalculable injury to the free colored man, and should not be countenanced by the Christian Churches.

The business of the Convention being now completed, the President, in a very pertinent and happy manner, pronounced a valedictory, alluding with heartfelt gratitude to God, to the entire harmony and love which had characterized all the proceedings of the Convention, and the almost perfect unanimity with which all the resolutions had been passed.

After prayer by Rev. Mr. Nevin, the Convention adjourned *sine die*.

S. C. STEVENS, *President*.

M. N. MILES,
E. MATTHEWS,
C. B. BOYNTON,
JAMES BIRNEY,
} *Secretaries.*

ADDRESS TO THE AMERICAN CHURCHES.

BRETHREN IN CHRIST :—Permit us, as members of the same household of faith with yourselves, affectionately to invite your prayerful consideration, to the important subject which has called us together, as a CHRISTIAN ANTI-SLAVERY CONVENTION.

We have assembled, dear brethren, in the fear of God, seeking wisdom from above to guide our deliberations. We have come together as friends of Christ's visible Church, earnestly seeking her peace, purity and prosperity. We love the Church. We love and honor her ministry, as a Heaven-appointed institution for propagating that gospel which is the power of God unto salvation. Our prayer to God is, that "Zion may arise and shine," that she may put on her beautiful garments, and attract multitudes of redeemed souls to her standard.

It is because we love the Church that we are convened. We are deeply concerned for her character and influence, and the moral power of her saving doctrines. We have long been oppressed with the painful conviction that these characteristics of her glory are sadly marred by the unhappy relation which she now holds to American Slavery. The results of such an unholy alliance, present and prospective, are what we anxiously deprecate.

American Slavery, connected as it is with the religious institutions of our country, has claims upon the anxious and prayerful consideration of Christians which *cannot be innocently rejected.* This is the fundamental proposition on which we base our present appeal. We lay it down as a position which cannot be overthrown, that if the American Church would sustain the slightest pretension to the benevolent spirit of her Redeemer, she *must* find in this subject matter for earnest thought and intense solicitude. If we can look at American Slavery as it is, and understand the relations which the Church sustains to this vile system, without being deeply moved, our hearts cannot be in sympathy with the heart of Christ.

It is not the institution of *Jewish* servitude that we urge on the consideration of the Churches, nor any questions of casuistry about *its* nature and character. It is *American* Slavery alone that concerns the American Church, whose true character is to be learned from American Slave law, and the cruel usages which it authorizes. Its nature, as the law defines it, is easily understood. It consists simply in making a human being an article of *property*, subject to the usual inci-

dents of property—putting him in the category of "goods and chattels."* This *property title* in beings made in the image of God, is the true *slave relation*, which is wicked in itself, and evil in all its tendencies. It is *wicked*, because it robs God of the souls which he has made for his own glory and redeemed with the precious blood of Christ, because it robs man of his sacred inalienable rights, and because it authorizes the infamous "trade in the souls of men." This *chattel principle*, which is the essence of American Slavery, is the evil root from which all the atrocities of the system germinate. Subject a human being to the usual incidents of property, to be governed by the inexorable laws of trade, and no power on earth can save him from liability to all the revolting cruelties of the infamous system—the tortures of the lash, the destruction of the family relation, the annihilation of marriage, and the brutal sundering of the dearest domestic ties. No degree of humanity on the part of the owner can secure *such property* against these distressing incidents. In the event of the master's death or insolvency—cases of every day occurrence—the arm of the law is stronger than his humanity, and the will of heirs and creditors more potent than his own. This property relation is therefore an irreconcilable foe to God and man. Like "the carnal mind, it is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed CAN be." To harbor and protect such an enemy in the bosom of the Church, is treachery to Christ.

There are other relations of servitude, and of involuntary subjection, not *necessarily* evil, with which the slaveholder often attempts to confound his own vile system, in order to hide its true character. But there is a heaven-wide difference between them. All other forms of subjection recognize in their subject the attributes of a man. This is true even of the prisoner under sentence of death. The law acknowledges in him human rights, and protects them through the whole process of his trial and imprisonment, from his arrest to his execution. A man may be a *bond-servant for life*, and compelled to serve with rigor too; yet, if his master has no power to sell him, and the law acknowledges him a man, invested with human rights, limited though they may be, and permits him to appeal to its power for their protection—in other words, if the *chattel* relation is wanting in his case; then his condition is immeasurably removed from that of the American slave. For the latter, the law makes no provision, except, alas, its severe provisions for his *punishment*†—none for the protection

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*"Slaves shall be deemed, sold, taken, and reputed to be chattels personal in the hands of their owners and possessors, their executors, administrators, and assigns, *to all intents, constructions and purposes whatsoever.*" [*Laws of South Carolina, Stroud, p.* 22–3.]

"A slave," according to the Louisiana Code, "is one who is in the power of a master to whom he belongs. The master may sell him, dispose of his person, his industry, and his labor; he can do nothing, possess nothing, nor acquire any thing, but what must belong to his master."

"Goods they are, and goods they shall be esteemed." [*Taylor's Elements, p.* 429.

†To this general fact there is one exception, the law punishes the *murder* of a slave with death; but this legal protection is so embarrassed with other legal provisions as to render it of no practical value to the slave. To an act making the wilful murder of a slave punishable with death, is appended the following proviso: *Provided always, this act shall not extend to the per-*

of his rights, because, as the courts have very consistently decided, property itself can have no rights to be protected; the acknowledgment of rights would destroy the property relation. In the eye of the law, property cannot be *wronged*, though it may be *damaged*. If slave-property is mangled, and thus injured in its productive or market value, the *master* may recover damage of the assailant; but it is for his own pocket, and not to compensate the sufferings of the helpless victim. It is the *master's* wrongs that the law redresses, not the *slave's*.

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son killing a slave outlawed by virtue of any act of assembly of this State, or to any slave in the act of resistance to his lawful owner or master, or to any slave dying under moderate correction."!! [*Haywood's Manual, p.* 530.]

"DYING UNDER MODERATE CORRECTION."!!! A slaveholder's idea of *moderation* in the use of the scourge!

This statute provides that a master may whip his slave to death with impunity, or may take the life even of a virtuous female who opposes his wicked demands upon her moral purity, or may shoot down a runaway slave.

A slave is outlawed, according to Judge Stroud, "whenever he runs away from his master, conceals himself in some obscure retreat, and, to sustain life, kills a hog or some animal of the cattle kind."!! [*Haywood's Manual, p.* 521.]

Add to this the fact that slave testimony is not admitted against a white man, and it will be seen how very slender is the protection which the law extends over the life of the slave. His only reliable protection is his pecuniary value. When his fugitive propensities have taken this away, his life is sacrificed without pity or remorse. Against other cruelties neither law nor pecuniary interest afford him protection. The Synod of Kentucky, in an address to the Presbyterians of that State, say, "that the life of a bondman cannot be taken with impunity. But the law extends its protection no further. Cruelty might be carried to any extent, provided life be spared. Mangling, imprisonment, starvation, every species of torture, may be inflicted upon him, and he has no redress."

We might cite authenticated facts, almost without number, to show that the bodily inflictions which the law thus allows, are extensively practiced, and with horrible cruelty often. What else is to be expected, when, according to the testimony of Thomas Jefferson, "the whole commerce between the master and slave is a perpetual exercise of the most boisterous passions?" One fact may serve as a specimen. It is related by the Rev. J. Boucher:

"While on the Alabama circuit, I spent the Sabbath with an old circuit preacher, who was also a doctor, living near the Horse Shoe, celebrated as Gen. Jackson's battle ground. On Monday morning early, he was reading Pope's Messiah to me, when his wife called him out. I glanced my eye out of the window and saw a slave man standing by, and they consulting over him. Presently the doctor took a raw hide from under his coat and began to cut up the half-naked back of the slave. I saw six or seven inches of the skin turn up perfectly white at every stroke, until the whole back was red with gore. The lacerated man cried out some at first; but at every blow the Dr. said, "*Won't ye hush? Won't ye hush?*" till the slave finally stood still and groaned. As soon as he had done, the Dr. came in panting, almost out of breath, and addressing me, said, '*Won't you go to prayer with us, sir?*' I fell upon my knees and prayed, but what I said I knew not. When I came out, the poor creature had crept up and knelt by the door during prayer, and his back was a gore of blood quite to his heels.

Would to God that such development of cruelty, even in the sacred ministry, were a solitary case! But it is far otherwise, as facts prove; and it is no more than the legitimate effect of the system upon the heart of the slaveholder. "That man," says Jefferson, "must be a prodigy who can retain his manners and morals undepraved by such circumstances."

The following case is related by Frederick Douglass:

"I had often seen black men whipped, and had always, when the lash

Dr. Beattie says, "It is impossible for a considerate and unprejudiced mind to think of slavery without horror. That a man, a rational and immortal being, should be treated on the same footing with a beast, a piece of wood, and bought and sold, and entirely subjected to the will of another man, * * * *and all for no crime*, but merely because he was born in a certain country, or of certain parents, or because he differs from us in the shape of his nose, the color of his skin, or the size of his lips; *if this be equitable*, or excusable, or pardonable, it is vain to talk any longer of the eternal distinctions of *right and wrong, truth and falsehood, good and evil*."

The most cruel inflictions of slavery are not its lacerations of the body. Its wounds cut deeper than the flesh of its victim, and touch sensibilities more acute. "Brutal stripes," as the Synod of Kentucky very justly remark, "and all the various kinds of personal indignities, are not the only species of cruelty which slavery licenses. The law does not recognize the family relation of the slave, and extends to him no protection in the enjoyment of domestic endearments. The members of a slave family may be forcibly separated, so that they shall never more meet until the final Judgment. And cupidity often induces the master to practice what the law allows. Brothers and sisters, parents and children, husbands and wives, are torn asunder, and permitted to see each other no more. These acts are daily occurring in the midst of us. The shrieks and the agony often witnessed on such occasions, proclaim with a trumpet-tongue the iniquity and cruelty of

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was applied with great severity, heard the sufferer cry out and beg for mercy; but in this case, the pain inflicted by the double blows of the hickory was so intense, that Billy never uttered so much as a groan. He shrank his body close to the trunk of the tree, around which his arms and legs were lashed, drew his shoulders up to his head, like a dying man, and trembled, or rather shivered, in all his members. The blood flowed from the commencement, and in a few minutes lay in small puddles at the root of the tree. I saw flakes of flesh as long as my finger, fall out of the gashes in his back; and I believe he was insensible during all the time he was receiving the last two hundred lashes. When the whole five hundred lashes had been counted by the person appointed to perform this duty, the half-dead body was unbound and laid in the shade of the tree upon which I sat. The gentlemen who had done the whipping, eight or ten in number, being joined by their friends, then came under the tree, and drank punch until their dinner was made ready, under a booth of green boughs at a short distance."

If our reasonings on this subject were more accustomed to contemplate ***slavery as it is***, rather than ***slavery in the abstract***, those who have Christian, or even ***human*** feelings, would come to more correct conclusions as to its character.

It is sometimes said that such specimens of cruelty do not fairly represent the character of slavery, because they are exceptions to the general practice. So we might say, when a hungry tiger bounds from his hiding place upon a terrified company of men, women and children, and bears off a mangled, bleeding, human victim to his jungle—such a scene as Grandfere witnessed in India—that such a case is an exception to the general experience of the inhabitants, and does not therefore fairly represent the character of the tiger, because most of the people are left unmolested by him! The truth is, such facts, whether few or many, show the natural ferocity of the monster, in both cases. If there are slaves that are spared the cruelties of the ferocious system, they owe it to humanity, and not to the clemency of the monster Slavery. Besides, if cruelties are exceptions to the general practice, they form, to say the least, a very large class of exceptions, as the scarred backs of thousands of slaves, and other marks of violence on their persons, can testify.

our system. The cries of these sufferers go up to the ears of the Lord of Saboath. There is not a neighborhood where these heart-rending scenes are not displayed. There is not a village or road that does not behold the sad procession of manacled outcasts, whose chains and mournful countenances tell that they are exiled by force from all that their hearts hold dear."*

Slavery chains and imprisons the soul. Knowledge is power—power which is deemed unsafe in the possession of the slave. Hence slave law denies him letters by the most severe enactments; and, in thus darkening the windows of his soul, shuts out from it the redeeming light of the gospel. The Synod of South Carolina and Georgia, in a "report," published in 1834, say, that "*the negroes are destitute of the privileges of the gospel, and ever will be, under the present state of things*;" that, "in this Christian republic, there are OVER TWO MILLION of human beings in the condition of *heathen*, and, in some respects, in a worse condition;" that "their moral and religious condition is such, as that they may justly be considered the *heathen of this Christian country, and will bear comparison with the heathen in any country in the world*;" that "it is universally the fact throughout the slaveholding

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* The following case is related by the editor of *Zion's Watchman*. It occurred in Philadelphia.

"As I was walking in Chesnut street, near the Court House, I saw many people, both white and colored, going in. I inquired the cause, and was told that a person claimed as a fugitive was to be tried. I went in; but the person claimed as *property*, had been tried, and the Judge was about to deliver his opinion. The house was filled; and all seemed to be waiting with the deepest anxiety. Soon the door opened, and the Sheriff entered, followed by a *female*, whose appearance was that of a *white* lady;—she was in *delicate* circumstances—was leaning upon the arm of *her husband*;—they advanced slowly, and with great anxiety upon their countenances, and took their seats, with their eyes fixed on the judge. All was silent as the grave.

The judge now commenced with the testimony, which was, that this woman came to this city about five years ago—that during this time she was married—that she was the mother of one male child, which was said to be *entirely white*, and was now about two years old. After going through all the testimony, he seemed to come to a pause. This was a moment of awful suspense to this innocent female, as she sat trembling and pale, supported by her husband. Soon the judge broke silence, by pronouncing her a *slave*. No sooner had the words fallen from his lips, 'I must give a warrant to take you back,' than she screamed and fell on the floor. Her cries might have been heard far off, 'O, my child, my child! O, my dear, dear husband! *I cannot, cannot leave you.*' While her husband appeared to be trying to comfort her, and was attempting to raise her up, with eyes streaming with grief, I heard a voice, saying, 'Take her to jail.' She was immediately surrounded by a number of officers, taken up, put into a close carriage, and hurried off, uttering the most heart-rending cries that ever fell upon my ears. I turned aside to give vent to my feelings in a flood of tears."

Henry B. Stanton relates a case which he witnessed in North Carolina. It was the case of a phrenzied mother which he passed on the road, of which the following is an extract:

"They've gone! they've gone! The soul-drivers have got them. Master would sell them. I told him I couldn't live without my children. I tried to make him sell me too; but he beat me and drove me off, and I got away and followed after them, and the drivers whipped me back;—and I never shall see my children again. Oh! what shall I do?" The poor creature shrieked and tossed her arms about with maniac wildness—and beat her bosom, and literally *cast dust into the air*, as she moved toward the village. At the last glimpse I had of her, she was nearly a quarter of a mile from us, still throwing handfulls of sand around her, with the same phrenzied air."

"Exceptions," such as these, are distressingly numerous. The Natchez Courier states, "that during the year 1836, no less than 250,000 slaves were carried into Mississippi, Alabama, Louisiana, and Arkansas."

The number of domestic ties that were cruelly sundered by these "business operations," must have been much greater. "Shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?"

States, either custom or law prohibits them the acquisition of letters, and, consequently, they can have no access to the Scriptures;" that "in the vast field extending from an entire State beyond the Potomac to the Sabine river, and from the Atlantic to the Ohio, there are, to the best of our knowledge, not *twelve* men exclusively devoted to the religious instruction of the negroes. * * * *Thousands and thousands hear not the sound of the gospel, or ever enter a church from one year to another.* * * * They have no Bibles to read at their own firesides—no family altars; and when in affliction, sickness, or death, they have no ministers to address to them the consolations of the gospel, nor to bury them with solemn and appropriate services."*

There is a powerful combination of causes, all conspiring to shut out the light of the true gospel from the mind of the slave.

1. Denying him the Bible we have seen, is one.

2. The want of proper religious teachers, is another.

Not *twelve* men devoted to this work in all the slaveholding States! The truth is, a vice-breeding miasma, such as slavery creates, is not the moral climate to raise up ministers of the gospel. "As to *ministers of their own color*," say the Synod of South Carolina and Georgia, "they are destitute, infinitely, both in point of numbers and qualifications, to say nothing of the fact, that such a ministry is looked upon with distrust and discountenanced. But do not the negroes have access to the gospel," they add, "through the stated ministry of the whites? No. * * * If we take the whole number of ministers in the slave-holding States, *but a very small portion pay any attention to them.* * * * The negroes have no regular and efficient ministry; as a matter of course, NO CHURCHES; neither is there sufficient room in the white churches for their accommodation. We know of but *five* churches in the slaveholding States built expressly for their use."

3. Another cause is, the slave's natural repugnance to receiving the gospel from his oppressors. This reason was forcibly explained by the Rev. S. K. Smead,—formerly a Kentucky slaveholder,—in a Presbyterian and Congregational Convention in Cincinnati. He found, to his surprise, an obstinate unwillingness in his slaves to receive religious instruction or religious privileges from their master, (though a man of undoubted piety and benevolence,) and he had

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* Proofs of this kind could be multiplied. A writer in the Charleston Observer says:

"I hazard the assertion, that throughout the bounds of our Synod (the Synod of South Carolina and Georgia), there are at least *one hundred thousand slaves*, speaking the same language as ourselves, who never *heard* of the plan of salvation by a Redeemer."

A writer in the Western Luminary—a religious paper published in Lexington, Kentucky—says:

"I proclaim it abroad to the Christian world, that *heathenism is as real in the slave States* as it is in the South-Sea Islands."

The Rev. C. C. Jones, in a sermon preached in Georgia in 1831, says:

"Generally speaking, they [the slaves] appear to us to be without God and without hope in the world—*a nation of heathen in our very midst.* We cannot cry out against the Papists for withholding the Scriptures from the common people, and keeping them in ignorance of the way of life, for we withhold the Bible from our servants, and keep them in ignorance of it."

The New Orleans Presbytery, so late as the year 1846, report, that "there are within the bounds of the Presbytery at least 100,000 colored persons, most of whom are slaves. It is a lamentable fact, that by far the greater part are *famishing and perishing for the bread of life.*"

been compelled to resort to the lash to induce them to attend to family worship. When he gave his slaves their freedom, the difficulty was both explained and removed.*

4. A fourth cause is, that what little of the gospel the slaves have an opportunity to learn, is, to a lamentable extent, a spurious, adulterated gospel. Slavery can no more endure a pure gospel than Popery, for its tendency is to "break every yoke." The same tyranny that binds the bodies and souls of men, puts the gospel also under bonds, to be dealt out only in such stinted and corrupted editions as will best subserve its own ends.† The gospel preached every where at the

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* The Rev. C. C. Jones, "whose praise is in all the churches," for his indefatigable labors in the spiritual service of the slaves, relates the following fact:

"I was preaching to a large congregation, on the epistle to Philemon; and when I insisted on *fidelity and obedience*, as Christian virtues in servants, and, upon the authority of Paul, CONDEMNED THE PRACTICE OF RUNNING AWAY, *one half of my audience deliberately rose up and walked off with themselves;* and those who remained looked any thing but satisfied with the preacher or his doctrines. After dismission, there was no small stir among them; some solemnly declared there was no such Epistle in the Bible; others, that it was not the gospel; others, that *I preached to please the masters;* others, that they did not care if they never heard me preach again."

A gospel that does not sympathize with human suffering has no power over the heart of the sufferer. The Savior commended himself to human sympathies by "preaching deliverance to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound."

Judge Jay publishes the following anecdote:

"A fugitive slave told his friends at the North, that he had ceased receiving the Lord's supper in the church to which he had been attached, because the CHURCH had sold his brother to pay for their communion plate; and, said he, 'I could not bear to go forward and receive the communion from vessels that were purchased with my brother's blood.'"

† Popery and Slavery both employ the sanctions of religion for the same object—to induce submission to their own tyrannic rule. A compound of ignorance and superstition is the kind of religion that best subserves this end. Superstition reverences false deities, and is guided by a false standard of moral obligation. Popery puts the Church in the place of God, and teaches that implicit obedience to all her mandates is the only way to be saved. "The way to be saved," which slaves are taught, is "*to be obedient and subject to their masters in all things.*" This is the never failing theme of their white teachers. "*Do all service for them, as if you did it for God himself.* * * * What faults you are guilty of towards your masters and mistresses, are faults done against God himself, who hath set your masters and mistresses over you *in his own stead*, and expects that you will do for them just as you would do for him. And pray do not think that I want to deceive you, when I tell you that your *masters and mistresses* are God's *overseers;* and that if you are faulty towards them, God himself will punish you severely for it in the next world, unless you *repent* of it, and strive to make amends by your *faithfulness and dilligence for the time to come;* for God himself hath declared the same."—*Bishop Meade's Discourses to Servants.*

The same preacher urges upon slaves fidelity to their masters by the terrible sanctions of a judgment to come:

"Remember that God requires this of you, and if you are not afraid of suffering for it here," (for not being careful of their masters' goods,) "you cannot escape the vengeance of Almighty God, who will judge between you and your masters, and make you pay severely, *in the next world,* for all the injustice you do them here."

He teaches them the rightfulness of their condition, by the consideration that it is the appointment of Heaven:

"Almighty God hath been pleased to make you slaves here, and to give you nothing but labor and poverty in this world, which you are obliged to submit to, as it is his will that it should be so." [Then it is the will of God that the white man should oppress the black man, and it is the slave only that has the judgments of God to fear, for being unwilling to suffer oppression!]

South, is, at best, a mutilated gospel. With the exception of our beloved brother from Lewis county, Ky., (Rev. John G. Fee,) we know of no Southern preacher at the present time, who can say with Paul, "I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God." The Rev. Amos Dresser writes, "On my return from Nashville, in 1835, I called on the Rev. J. W. Hall, of Gallatin, thirty

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The bishop even makes the golden rule support the right of oppression:

"*All things whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them;* that is, do by all mankind just as you would desire they should do by you, if you were in their place and they in yours."

"Now to suit this rule to your particular circumstances: Suppose you were masters and mistresses and had servants under you, would you not desire that your servants should do their business *faithfully and honestly?* * * That they should behave themselves with respect towards you and yours? * * You are servants, do therefore as you would wish to be done by."

Let us try another application of the same rule: Suppose you were a band of highwaymen, would you not desire every traveller you meet to deliver up his purse? "*Do therefore as you would wish to be done by;*" give up your purse, as the rule requires, to the first robber that presents a pistol to your breast. The rule is as just and obligatory on the victim of highway robbery, as the victim of slaveholding robbery. "If you were a slaveholder, and were daily and hourly robbing human beings of all their earnings, of every thing dear to humanity, would you not desire that your victims would submit to your outrages?"

Rev. Joshua Boucher says "that the slaves of the South are taught that God made them black with the design that they should be slaves. A man who had been held as a slave in Virginia, where a meeting-house was erected to afford slaves an opportunity of listening to special preaching, asked me if it was in the Bible that he should be a slave, and said they had always told him it was there, that they (the colored people) should be slaves."

Bishop Meade exhorts slaves not to "*grumble or repine* at their condition; for this will not only make your life uneasy, but will greatly offend Almighty God. Consider that it is not yourselves—it is not the people that you belong to—it is not the men that have brought you to it—but it is the will of God, who by his providence hath made you servants, because, no doubt, he knew that condition would be best for you in this world, and help you the better towards heaven, if you would but do your duty in it. So that any discontent at your not being free or rich, or great, as you see some others, is quarrelling with your heavenly Master, and finding fault with God himself, who hath made you what you are."

Again: "Some he hath made masters and mistresses for taking care of their children and others that belong to them. * * * Some he hath made servants and slaves, to assist and work for their masters and mistresses that provide for them."

The children of Israel, when in the Egyptian house of bondage, had an "Almighty God," who *sympathised with their affliction,* and "heard their cry by reason of their task-masters;" and futurity will, no doubt, reveal the fact that oppressed Americans have also such a God, who "will be greatly offended" at the cruelty of the oppressor, rather than the groaning of the oppressed. But the God in whom the slaves are taught to believe, who has appointed slave-drivers to be his "*overseers*" of men, to be reverenced and obeyed as the proper representative of his own character and authority, is a very different being from Israel's God. A God who takes part with the oppressor in crushing the oppressed, has no attribute to recommend him to the heart of the slave. "Don't you love God?" said a minister to a colored boy. "What! me love God, who made me with a black skin, and white man to whip me!" Thus the preachers of a spurious gospel, which sanctifies cruelty and oppression, actually teach the slave to HATE GOD. Says the Hon. Wm. Jay:

"The *very peculiar character* of that Christianity which is offered to the slaves is well calculated to insure its rejection by them. Love is the great

miles from Nashville, and shall not soon forget the kindness shown me by himself and family. In speaking of the moral desolation of the country, he gave it as his opinion, that if slavery continued five years longer, there would not be found a devoted minister of the gospel in all the South; and added, 'If I should preach the whole truth to my people, I could not stay with them three months.'" Cas-

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motive, argument and command of the gospel. God is love. God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son. We love God because he first loved us. Love one another, so shall all men know that ye are my disciples. When *we* are cruelly and unjustly treated, we know that we suffer in violation of the precepts of our religion. Far different is the religion offered to the slave. He is instructed that the common Father of us all has authorized a portion of his children to convert the others into articles of merchandize. The favored children, moreover, are permitted to withhold from their brethren the revelation made by their heavenly Father, and which he has declared is able to make them wise unto salvation. The slave also learns by experience, that to him is denied the marriage and the parental relations—blessed boons, expressly conferred by God upon others."

We can now discover the reason why Southern planters have of late become so much in favor of having the gospel preached to their slaves. We have sometimes exhilerating intelligence from that quarter. The gospel has of late found so much favor in the eyes of godless planters, that their benevolence would gladly support preachers on their plantations at their own expense. Why should they not, when *such a gospel* will yield an hundred per cent. on the original cost? Stir up the religious element in the slave, and teach his credulity "that his supreme rule of duty and measure of morality consists in yielding implicit obedience" to his master's authority; and it will enhance both his master's profits and his market value. A slaveholder in South Carolina told Dr. Brisbane, in 1844, "that religion had done more for him with his slaves than four wagon loads of cowskins."

The Charleston Mercury says:

"No longer than ten or twelve years since, when the plan of sending the missionaries to our blacks was first entered upon, we all remember the opposition it raised among many of our planters, who were averse to it as an innovation fraught with ill consequences, they could not tell what, but which they were determined not to risk."

It was the enlightening effect of an unadulterated Christianity which these planters feared. And they had reason to fear it. Let the slaves learn the equal brotherhood of the human race, as taught in the Bible, and the impartial love of the Father, who sympathizes with his oppressed children, and denounces wrath on the oppressor, and they would understand their own rights, and the criminality of slaveholding usurpation. The unadulterated Bible among the slaves is still regarded with dread, as the following treatment of a Bible agent at New Orleans, a few years since, is sufficient to show:

"Chauncey B. Black was brought before Recorder Baldwin, charged with tampering with slaves. It was proved that he was seen conversing with a number of them in the street; that he asked them if they could read and write, and if they would like a Bible. This was the amount of the testimony against him. *In palliation of his conduct*, it was shown that he was regularly appointed agent of the Bible Society in New Orleans, to distribute the Bible to such as would accept of it. The Society, however, disclaimed *having the most distant intention of giving the Scriptures to slaves*; and it was said Black had exceeded his commission in offering it. But as it appeared to be a misunderstanding on his part, and not intentional interference with the peculiar institution, he was discharged with a *caution not to repeat his offense.*"—*N. O. Picayune.*

But *oral* religious instruction, the planters have found to be both safe and salutary. Mr. Jones, among his other labors for the slaves (or rather the slaveholders), has prepared a catechism for their instruction. One of his questions is, "Is it right for the servant to run away? or is it right to harbor a runaway?" Answer: "No." The salutary effect of this catechism is thus described by a South Carolina planter, in a letter dated May, 1845:

sius M. Clay, of Kentucky, says, "the bells of seven churches weekly toll in my ears, till I am deaf with the sound, calling up the people to the worship of the ever-living and omnipotent God. * * * And yet, scenes which would have added fresh infamy to Babylon, and

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"A near neighbor of mine, a prominent member of the Church to which he belonged, had contented himself with giving his people the usual religious privileges. About six months ago, he commenced giving them special religious instruction. He used Jones' Catechism principally. * * * He states that he has now comparatively no trouble in their management."

"The wretched slaves," says Mr. Jay, "are required by their religious teachers to believe that God requires them to remain voluntarily in a state of ignorance and degradation, and even to refuse their aid to their wives, children and friends, who are endeavoring to recover their liberty! Such a doctrine is alone sufficient to give the negroes a disgust to the religion of which they are assured it forms a part."

"Is there a slave, is there a white man, who believes that the Rev. C. C. Jones, if through some misfortune or violence, he should be reduced to bondage in Russia or Turkey, would not, in spite of his catechism, embrace the first favorable opportunity to run away? or that he would be restrained by scruples of conscience, from *harboring* a fellow countryman, who had partially succeeded in making his escape?"

It was right for the *white* men of the American Revolution to *fight* for freedom, and spill the blood of thousands in securing it. But for *black* men to seek freedom, from an oppression ten thousand times worse than our fathers ever felt, and that by the most harmless means, without offering violence to any man, is a sin against God, according to the ethics of a pro-slavery religion!

A meeting in Charleston, in 1845, addressed a circular to prominent planters in South Carolina and Georgia, asking for information on the subject "of the influence of religious instruction upon the discipline of plantations, and the spirit and the subordination of the negroes." The following are some of the responses:

"Plantations under religious instruction are more easily governed than those that are not." *Thomas Cook.*

"Upon the discipline and subordination of plantations, religious instruction will be found generally and decidedly beneficial." *John Dyson.*

"I have found the owners of plantations around, not only willing but desirous that we should preach to their negroes; and they find, as they expect, a better spirit and subordination among them." *Wm. Curtis.*

"The deeper the piety of the slave, the more valuable is he *in every sense of the word*," [for work or for sale.] *James Gillam.*

"A regard to self-interest should lead every planter to give his people religious instruction." *N. R. Middleton.*

"All our negroes have, to a great extent, grown up under religious instruction. * * * They are more obedient and more to be depended on. *We have few or no runaways.*" *Nicholas Ware.*

"Planters generally are encouraged by the good resulting from religious instruction. * * * There are *colored* Methodist and Baptist religious teachers, and the 'practical results' of the teaching of these preachers, (so far as my experience goes,) are decidedly bad." *J. Stewart Hanchell.*

If, with this spirit of subordination, *true* piety and gospel morality were found associated, it would show that "the religious instruction," defective as it is, is profitable to the *slave*, as well as the master. A quiet, unresisting spirit is among the effects of *true* religion in the soul; but it is not exercised on the slaveholder's principle—the *righteousness* of oppression—but on the gospel principle of *forgiveness* of injuries. A pro-slavery religion never teaches submission to the oppressor on such a principle. "The slave is taught," says Mr. Jay, "that those privations and sufferings which he endures, * * are in perfect accordance with the precepts of his religion; and that to pray for the *forgiveness* of his oppressor would be but to insult that divine Majesty which clothed the oppressor with power, and authorized him to use it in crushing his weaker brother."

wrested the palm of reckless cruelty from Nero's bonfire, Rome, have been enacted, *not in a corner*. And the sentinels of Him 'whose arm is not shortened,' from the watch-towers of Israel, have not ceased to cry out, 'all is well.'"*

"By their fruits ye shall know them." This test is as applicable to *principles* and systems of religious instruction, as to the characters of men. We have seen the "fruits" of *real* religious instruction to the slaves, as far as profit to his master is concerned. Is there also "fruit unto holiness, whose end is eternal life?" We have sought for answers to this question from authentic sources.

Dr. Lafon, who was once a master and a trafficker of slaves, says:

"In the slave States of this country, it is claimed that there are many thousands of slaves who have been hopefully converted to God. Without undertaking to say that these supposed conversions are spurious, we do say, on the testimony of those well qualified to form a correct opinion in the premises, *that the religion of a large portion of the degraded slaves, consists chiefly in superstition, fanatical practices, and an obsequious servility to the tyrants who rule them.*"

The Rev. C. C. Jones, whom we have repeatedly referred to, says:

"The description which the apostle Paul, in his epistle to the Romans, gives of the heathen world, will apply with very little abatement to our negroes. They lie, blaspheme, are slothful, envious, malicious, inventors of evil things, deceivers, covenant breakers, implacable, unmerciful."

This is his description of their character without God. "Of THE PROFESSORS OF RELIGION among them," he says:

"There are many of questionable piety, who occasion the different churches great trouble in discipline, for they are extremely ignorant, and frequently are guilty of the *grossest vices.*"

The Rev. Dr. Dalcho, of St. Michæl's Church, Charleston, says:

THERE IS LITTLE CONFIDENCE TO BE PLACED IN THE RELIGIOUS PROFESSIONS OF NEGROES. I speak generally. Much animal excitement may be, and often times is, produced, where but little real devotion is felt in the heart."

The Rev. Dr. Nelson, formerly from Tennessee, says:

"The concentrated recollection of *thirty years*, furnishes me with three instances only, where I could say I have reason, from the known walk of that slave, to believe him or her a sincere Christian."

A spurious gospel produces a spurious religious experience, and a spurious religious practice.

* We have noticed the very defective gospel which is preached, at the South, to the slaves—and the fruits of it. A very natural inquiry in this connexion is, what is the character of the gospel which is preached to the masters? Judging the tree by its fruits, our conclusion is not the most favorable. Miss Harriet Martineau, who traveled throughout the South, gives the following description of Southern preachers and preaching:

"Of the Presbyterians, as well as other clergy of the South, some are even planters, superintending the toils of their slaves, and making purchases or effecting sales in the slave markets, during the week, and preaching on Sundays whatever they can devise that is least contradictory to their daily practice. I watched closely the preaching in the South—that of all denominations—to see what could be made of Christianity, "the highest fact in the rights of man," in such a region. I found the stricter religionists preaching reward and punishment in connection with modes of belief, and hatred of the Catholics. I found the more philosophical preaching for or against materialism, and diverging to phrenology. I found the more quiet and 'gentlemanly' preaching harmless abstractions—the four seasons, the attributes of the Deity, prosperity and adversity, &c. * * I heard one noble religious discourse from the Rev. Joel Parker, a Presbyterian clergyman, of New Orleans; [before Mr. Parker went to New Orleans he was ranked with that class of Northern preachers, who were wont to apply the gospel which they preached to the details of moral life;] but, except that one, I never heard any available reference made to the grand truths of religion, or principles of morals. The great principles which regard the three relations, to God, man, and self, were never touched upon. Meantime the clergy were pretending to find express sanctions of slavery in the Bible; and putting words to this purpose in the mouths of public men, who do not profess to remember the existence of the Bible in any other connexion. The clergy were boasting at public meetings, that there was not a periodical

The aggregate of evils produced by slavery, is beyond the power of the human mind to estimate. A principle which makes merchandize of the bodies and the souls and the rights of men—and of the tenderest relations of domestic life—and merchandize of *female virtue*, ne-

south of the Potomac which did not advocate slavery; and some were even setting up a magazine, whose "fundamental principle is, that man ought to be the property of man!"

The state of society at the South, furnishes a reasonable presumption that the character of the preaching there is no better than Miss Martineau describes it to be. A pure gospel, faithfully preached, never fails to exert a purifying effect on the morals of society, beyond that of any other agency. One of the most unanswerable arguments against Romanism, therefore, is, the wretched state of morals—the insecurity of life, property and virtue—in those countries which are solely under the influence of this Church, such as Spain and Mexico. A few quotations, from Southern authorities, may serve to show how powerless for good is *slaveholding* religion.

The Governor of Kentucky, in his message, in 1837, says:

"We long to see the day when the law will assert its majesty and stop the wanton destruction of life which almost daily occurs within the jurisdiction of this commonwealth. MEN SLAUGHTER EACH OTHER WITH ALMOST PERFECT IMPUNITY. A species of common law has grown up in Kentucky, which, were it written down, would in all civilized countries, cause her to be re-christened in derision, THE LAND OF BLOOD." [That day he will never see while slavery continues, and the ministers of religion justify it.]

The Bishop of Kentucky said, that some with whom he had conversed, estimated the number of murders in that State at 80 per annum; but he rated them at about 30; and that not "an instance of capital punishment in any white offender" had occurred for the last three years. "It is believed," he says, "that there are more homicides, on an average of two years, in any of our most populous counties, than in the whole of several of our States, of equal, or nearly equal population of Kentucky."

Gov. McVay, of Alabama, says:

"We hear of homicides in different parts of the State continually, and yet have few convictions and still fewer executions. Why do we hear of stabbings and shootings, almost daily, in some part or other of our State."

"The moral atmosphere of our State," says a Mississippi paper, "appears to be in a deleterious and sanguinary condition. Almost every exchange paper which reaches us, contains some inhuman and revolting case of murder, or death by violence." It avers that not less than FIFTEEN such cases have occurred within the certain knowledge of the editor, "within the past three months."

The New Orleans Bee, of May 23rd, 1838, says, that a "FRIGHTFUL DELUGE OF HUMAN BLOOD FLOWS THROUGH OUR STREETS AND OUR PLACES OF PUBLIC RESORT."

This spirit of violence is found, alas, in the *Church*, and in the *sacred ministry*. The Rev. Amos Dresser, for the crime of being an abolitionist, was sentenced, by a lynch court at Nashville, to receive 20 lashes with a cowskin, upon his bare back. "Among my triers," he says, "was a great portion of the respectability of Nashville. Nearly half of the whole number, professors of Christianity, the reputed stay of the Church—supporters of the cause of benevolence, in the form of Tract and Missionary Societies and Sabbath schools—several members, and most of the elders of the Presbyterian Church, from whose hands, but a few days before, I had received the emblems of the broken body and shed blood of our blessed Savior." (!!!) One of them was a Cambellite minister.

The editor of the Georgia Chronicle, A PROFESSOR OF RELIGION! said, that "Dresser ought to have been hanged as high as Haman, and left there to rot upon the gibbet, until the wind whistled through his bones; and added, that the cry of the whole South should be death, instant death to the Abolitionist, wherever he is caught."

The Rev. Thomas S. Witherspoon, of Alabama, wrote to the editor of the Emancipator:

"When the tardy process of the law is too long in redressing our grievances, we of the South have adopted the summary remedy of Judge Lynch—and really I think it one of the most wholesome and salutary remedies for the malady of Northern fanaticism, that can be applied. * * * Let your emisaries dare venture to cross the Potomac, and I cannot promise you that their fate will be less than Haman's."

The Rev. William S. Plummer, D. D., of Virginia, a very prominent and influential minister of the Presbyterian Church—and the author of devotional writings of a high character—in a letter to the Chairman of a Committee, appointed by the citizens of Richmond, uses, among other violent expressions, the following language:

"If Abolitionists will set the country in a blaze, *it is but fair that they should have the first warming at the fire.*"

If any one is in doubt what this "*warming*"—recommended by this distinguished Southern divine—means, he will find it explained in the following threat of the New Orleans True American, against "the Bostonians, one and all:"

cessarily tramples on every precept of the Decalogue (*). It is evil in all its tendencies ;—a Bohon Upas that poisons the moral atmosphere all around it. The injuries it inflicts on the oppressed, are returned, if possible, with double vengeance on the head of the oppressor. It pollutes the morals of a rising family, depraves and degrades society,

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"Let them send out their men to Louisiana; they will never return to tell their suffering, but they shall expiate the crime of interfering in our domestic institutions, by being BURNED AT THE STAKE."

The Rev. Robert Anderson, writing to the Sessions of the Presbyterian Congregations within the bounds of West-Hanover Presbytery, Va., closes with the following sentence:

"If there be any stray goat of a minister among us, tainted with the blood-hound principles of Abolitionism, let him be ferretted out, silenced, excommunicated, and *left to the public to dispose of him in other respects*"—in plain English, *to hang or burn him*, in execution of the sentence of Judge Lynch. And for what? Why, for being tainted with the principles of Christianity!—with the spirit of the Good Samaritan!

Must we be subjected to the charge of "SCHISM," for proposing to "withdraw" from *such* Churches and *such* ministers?

The Charleston riot of 1835, which sacked the post-office, and made a bonfire of a portion of its contents, and the events connected with it, furnish a most humiliating exhibition of the character of a pro-slavery religion. The rioters called a public meeting for the avowed purpose of controlling the freedom of the mail. The Charleston Courier gave the particulars of the meeting, among which it notices, with evident gratification, the following:

"The CLERGY, of all denominations, attended in a body, lending *their sanction* to the proceedings, and adding by their presence to the impressive character of the scene."

A grievous fault of the American pulpit, at the present time, is its *silence* on the subject of popular sins. But the Charleston "clergy," it seems, were not satisfied merely to withhold that rebuke from public, outrageous sins, which, as the watchmen of Zion, the salt of the earth, and the light of the world, they were sacredly bound to administer; they must even "lend *their sanction*" to such sins, directly and publicly, by presenting themselves "in a body," on the occasion, for this very purpose.

But the master, to whom these *ministers* of sin had "yielded themselves servants to obey," had still more work for them, in his vile service. "The sacrifice of decency in attending this lawless meeting," says Mr. Jay, "was not the only one which the Charleston clergy offered on the altar of slavery," as appears from the following resolution, passed at the slaveholder's meeting:

"*Resolved*, That the thanks of this meeting are due to the reverend gentlemen of the clergy in this city, who have so *promptly* and so *effectually* responded to the public sentiment, by suspending their schools, in which the *free colored population* were taught; and that this meeting deem it a *patriotic* action, worthy of all *praise*, and proper to be imitated by the teachers of similar schools throughout the State."

It may secure "the *praise* of [wicked] men," for ministers of the Lord Jesus Christ, to drive children from their Sunday schools, because they are black, but not "the praise of God."

If there are Christians who desire to "join themselves" in religious fellowship with these worshippers of the American Moloch, we are not of the number.

*The following definition of slavery by the Rev. R. J. Breckenridge, D. D., a native of Kentucky, and raised a slaveholder, fully sustains this position:

"What is slavery, as it exists among us? We reply, it is that condition, enforced by the laws of one-half the States of this confederacy, in which one portion of the community, called masters, is allowed such power over another portion called slaves, as—

1. To deprive them of the entire earnings of their own labor, except only so much as is necessary to continue labor itself, by continuing healthy existence—thus committing *clear robbery*.

2. To reduce them to the necessity of universal concubinage, by denying to them the civil rights of marriage—thus breaking up the dearest relations of life, and encouraging *universal prostitution*.

3. To deprive them of the means and opportunities of moral and intellectual culture; in many States making it a high penal offence to teach them to read—thus *perpetuating* whatever evil there is that proceeds from ignorance.

4. To set up between parents and their children an authority higher than the impulse of nature and *the laws of God*, which breaks up the authority of the father over his own offspring, and at pleasure separates the mother at a returnless distance from her child—thus abrogating the clear laws of nature, thus outraging all decency and justice, and degrading and oppressing thousands upon thousands of beings created like

and engenders a spirit of violence and blood.* Slavery is a crime which is at this moment working immense mischief to the moral, social, civil and religious interests of our country—waging a deadly war against the principles of righteousness in the Church, and of liberty in the State, and threatening to overthrow all that our fathers toiled and bled for;—a crime which, according to the established laws of God's moral and providential government, exposes our nation, most fearfully, to the terrible judgments of Heaven, and, unless repented of, the sure presage of wrath and ruin.

But why waste arguments, perhaps you are ready to reply, on a point which we are all ready to admit? Every body acknowledges that slavery is a giant evil, of portentous aspect. We ask our brethren, then, in all candor, *ought such an evil to be winked at by the Church of God?* Is it not a matter which has claims upon our sympathies of the strongest kind? Is it consistent with the benevolence which our religion professes, to pass coldly by the bleeding victim of robbery and oppression cast at our feet, like the Priest and Levite in the parable, without extending a helping hand to the sufferer, or uttering a syllable of remonstrance against the cruelty of his spoiler? We would affectionately ask our Christian brethren, if the apathy which now pervades the American Church on this deeply interesting subject—the disposition, which is extensively manifested, to close our churches, our pulpits, our ears, and our hearts against it—is not derogatory to the character of the Church, and dishonorable to the religion of which it is the professed embodiment? Has her moral sense become so morbid, that she is deaf to the cry of the poor, and her conscience seared as with a hot iron against the threatened judgments of God on such

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themselves in the image of the Most High God. THIS IS SLAVERY, as it is daily exhibited in every slave State."—*African Repository*, 1834.

Must we be branded as "fanatics," because we *abhor* such a system of "*robbery*," pollution and cruelty, and advocate its *abolition?* And does fidelity to Christ require us to hold religious fellowship with those who traduce the Holy Bible by pleading its sanction for the vile system, and with those also who practice it?

*"Slavery," said Mr. Johnson, a member of the Virginia Convention for revising the Constitution, "has been the foundation of that impiety and dissipation, which has been so much disseminated among our countrymen."

Some of the most disgusting developments of the influence of slavery, in perverting and stupifying the moral sense, are found in the Church itself. The writer of this document, while passing through Virginia, in 1819, was informed, on reliable authority, that the Presbyterian College of that State had invested its funds in *female slaves*, as the most productive and eligible kind of investment. Thus a college, founded to subserve the interests of the Church, had gone deliberately into the business of breeding young negroes for the market, to supply the means of educating young men for the ministry and other professions!

Churches, at the South, as such, have been wont to hold slaves and *job* them out to pay the pastor's salary. The Rev. Mr. Cable testifies that the Church to which he belonged, at the Union Theological Seminary, raised a thousand dollars a year, from this source, with which they paid the salary of their pastor. The Rev. Mr. Paxton, once a Virginia slaveholder, says, the Church in Virginia, of which he was pastor, paid his salary chiefly in the same way, having a fund of SEVENTY SLAVES.

In the overflowings of their piety and benevolence, slaveholders have sometimes donated slaves for *missionary purposes!* A Mrs. Ann Pray, of Georgia, in 1832, left a legacy to the American Board of certain slaves—which legacy was very properly declined. It is but a short time since an advertisement appeared in a Southern paper, offering for sale 40 negroes, for the reason that their owner had devoted himself to A MISSIONARY LIFE! Think of a devoted missionary subjecting his forty slaves, of all ages and sexes, to the horrors of a slave sale, that he might pocket the avails and go on a mission to the heathen!!! "Unto their assembly, mine honor, be not thou united!"

delinquents? Is the whole head sick, and the whole heart faint? When the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth? faith to believe that "whoso stoppeth his ears at the cry of the poor, shall cry also himself, and shall not be heard?—and to understand that "he that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be an abomination?" The voice of God's providence, as heard in the groans of millions of our crushed brethren, is crying in the ears of the American Church, Where is thy brother? Dare the Church return, in the language of her apathy and inaction, the heartless reply of Cain, I know not; am I my brother's keeper?

There is another consideration which gives augmented force to the claims of the American slave. For the Priest and the Levite who passed by on the other side, it shall be more tolerable in the day of judgment, than for us, if we imitate their heartless example; for *they* were not the men of violence and blood, that stripped and mangled the bleeding stranger. Alas for the American Church!—this cannot be said of her. The sufferer *she* neglects, is the victim which her own sons have robbed and lacerated, and left bleeding at her feet! SIX HUNDRED THOUSAND living witnesses can testify to this fact!—600,000 slaves held in bondage by American church members, *in good and regular standing*, without hindrance or rebuke! Is this fact, dear brethren, a matter of no concern to us as Christians? Is it not a matter of the deepest concern? It is a stain on the character of American Christianity, and will furnish a black page in her future history which postcrity will blush to read. In the purified Church of the future, with what profound amazement will they learn that the Church of the present age was deeply implicated in the most infamous traffic that ever disgraced humanity—the traffic in the souls of men!—that both ministers and private members could *so far* depart from the Saviour's law of love, as to strip their fellow men, by hundreds of thousands—not sparing even their own brethren in the Lord—of all their rights, and all their earnings, and all security in domestic endearments!

America may truly be called the land of Christian barbarity!—deeply mortifying as this confession is. The *chattel* system, with all the inseparable cruelties that belong to it—such as buying, selling, whipping, breaking up families, hunting down fugitives with rifles and blood-hounds, &c.—receives the sanction and fellowship of the American Church and her sacred ministry! In this respect, our country sustains a singular and unenviable pre-eminence over all Christendom—a pre-eminence which has called forth the following scathing rebuke from a foreign writer:

"Whatever may have been the unutterable wickedness of slavery in the West India Islands, there it never was baptized in the Redeemer's hallowed name, and its corruptions were not concealed in the garb of religion. That acme of piratical turpitude was reserved for the professed disciples of Jesus in America."

Hear the confession of Southern men on this point. The Rev. Jas. Smylie, of Mississippi, writing in defense of slavery, says:

"If slavery be a sin, and apprehending slaves with a view to restore them to their masters, is a direct violation of the Divine law; and if the *buying*, *selling*, or *holding* a slave for the sake of *gain*, is a hein-

ous sin and scandal, then, verily, three-fourths of all the Episcopalians, Methodists, Baptists, and Presbyterians, in eleven States of the Union [*fourteen* he would now have said], are of the Devil. They hold, if they do not buy and sell, slaves, and, with few exceptions, they hesitate not to apprehend and restore runaway slaves when in their power."

The concurrent testimony of the Synod of Kentucky, we have in the following confession :

"Cases have occurred in our own denomination, where professors of the religion of mercy have torn the mother from her children, and sent her into a merciless and returnless exile; yet acts of discipline have rarely followed such conduct."

Brethren, do you love that blessed Savior who gave his life a ransom for your souls ? and can you behold with indifference the object of your supreme affection thus cruelly wounded in the house of his friends ?—his sacred name and cause exposed to the contempt of the scoffing infidel, by the organized inhumanity of those who bear his name and advocate his cause ? It is not the lacerated body of an unknown stranger that appeals to your compassion; it is the marred visage of your Beloved ! How can we refrain from grief, to see his spotless and lovely character so hideously misrepresented, by those who profess a near similitude to him !

The American Church, according to the judgment which she has herself pronounced, stands convicted of a crime, than which there is none greater known to her laws. The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church have left on their records the following unrepealed testimony, given in the year 1818 :

"We consider the voluntary enslaving of one part of the human race by another, as a gross violation of the most precious and sacred rights of human nature ; as *utterly* inconsistent with the law of God, which requires us to love our neighbor as ourselves ; and as totally irreconcilable with the spirit and principles of the gospel of Christ, which enjoins, that all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them." Alluding to some of the abominations of the system which they describe, the Assembly add : "Such are some of the consequences of slavery—consequences not imaginary, but which connect themselves with its very existence."

The same Church has declared slaveholding to be *man-stealing*. The editions of their "Confession of Faith," from 1794 to 1816, in their exposition of the Eighth Commandment, define *man-stealing* to "comprehend all who are concerned in bringing any of the human race into slavery, or in retaining them in it. Stealers of men are all those who bring off slaves or freemen, and *keep*, *sell*, or *buy* them. 'To steal a freeman,' says Grotius, 'is the highest kind of theft. In other instances, we steal only human property; but when we steal or retain men in slavery, we seize those who, in common with ourselves, are constituted, by the original grant, lords of the earth.' "

Such is Presbyterianism in *theory*. What is the *practice* of that church ? Let the 70,000 slaves, held by her members "in good and regular standing," answer !

The great founder of Methodism is no less explicit and decisive in his condemnation of the slaveholder. "This equally concerns," he says, "all slaveholders, of whatsoever rank and degree ; seeing men-

buyers are exactly on a level with men-stealers! Indeed, you say, I pay honestly for my goods; and I am not concerned to know how they are come by. Nay, but you are, you are deeply concerned to know that they are honestly come by; otherwise, you are a partaker with a thief, and not a jot honester than he. But you do know that they are *not* honestly come by; you know they are procured by means nothing near so *innocent* as picking pockets, house-breaking, or robbing upon the highway."

Dr. Adam Clark says, that "among Christians slavery is an enormity and a crime, for which perdition has scarcely an adequate state of punishment." The General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, in 1780, say "that slavery is contrary to the *laws of God, man,* and *nature,* and hurtful to society; CONTRARY TO THE DICTATES OF CONSCIENCE AND PURE RELIGION; *and doing what we would not that others should do unto us.*" The same Church had originally in her Discipline a rule requiring every member to execute and record an instrument for the emancipation of his slaves within the space of two years; and another rule declaring, that "those who *bought* or *sold* SLAVES, or gave them away, unless on purpose to free them, should be expelled immediately."

Such is Methodist testimony against slavery; the utter incongruity of which, with her modern *practice,* we could prove by a cloud of more than 100,000 living, manacled witnesses.

Standard commentators on the Bible concur with the writers quoted in considering *slaveholding* and *man-stealing* as IDENTICAL. "How has the present slaveholder come into the possession of the children whom he now holds as slaves? They were never willed to him, nor did he purchase them of another. How could he take possession of them, and part them from their parents, without stealing them?" More than 60,000 *free-born* Americans—if it is true "that *all* men are born free and equal"— are thus annually stolen into slavery; and in this cruel work of stealing helpless infants, the American Church has had a liberal share.

Now, brethren, is the concurrent decision of these competent judges a *just* one? To those who are pledged to seek the *purity* of the Church, this is a grave, practical question. Let the man who doubts its correctness, put himself in the slave's condition. As he gathers his affectionate family around the domestic fireside, let him, in fancy, transform this happy circle into "goods and chattels," The bailiff enters and lays his attachment upon the "goods," to satisfy the claims of their master's creditor. They are seized and manacled, and hurried off to the prisoner's cell, the established depository of such "goods." Tears—entreaties—shrieks—are all of no avail. If the stronger arms and hearts of father and brothers attempt to protect from savage rudeness the weak and delicate, a stunning blow from the officer of the law lays them quiet and quivering at his feet. How changed the condition of this family!—incarcerated with culprits—shut up in separate cells—loaded with chains, and all for no crime! But this is only the *beginning* of their sorrows. The auction day arrives. The *goods* are arranged upon the auction stand, handled and inspected with unfeeling rudeness. This family are now met for the last time! As the bidding progresses, the successive strokes of the

auctioneer's hammer sunders every domestic tie that had grouped them into one family. The rice swamp, the cotton field, the sugar plantation, are the separate and distant destinations of the husband, wife, and sons. And the fair and accomplished daughters ?———— The story of their sufferings is not to be told !

Such experience would soon clear away the clouds from the moral vision of the subject, and leave him no longer in doubt about the *criminality* of holding *human beings* in the condition of *goods* and *chattels*. To ask him whether such a thing was right, would be an insult to his common sense ! The English language could not furnish him adequate terms to express his views of the unutterable atrocity, the "piratical turpitude" of the practice. To call it man-stealing, the most aggravated kind of theft, would sound tame and insipid to his tortured sensibilities. Let him once *stand under* the crushing system, and he would get an *understanding* of its true character, which no amount of casuistical sophistry could mystify.

And if such *is the true character* of American slavery, WHERE, in the sight of God, stands the American Church, with her SIX HUNDRED THOUSAND bleeding victims of oppression at her feet? On these 600,000 victims she is perpetrating a wrong and a crime of the most heinous character—a crime to which the Divine law affixes the death penalty, and which our lenient free-state laws punish with nothing less than the Penitentiary !

Are we shocked at this conclusion ?—a conclusion which brands the refined, intelligent, aye, and pious slaveholder, with the crime of *man-stealing?* We cannot help it. Is it a legitimate conclusion ? is the question on which its adoption must turn ; not whether it is shocking. We have impanneled an impartial jury in the case, whose unanimous verdict is GUILTY ! *Logic* is sometimes as inexorable as slave law itself. As, in a court of justice, neither the strong humane sympathies of the jury, nor the elevated standing and character of the prisoner at the bar, can shield him from conviction, when the proof of his guilt is irresistible ; so neither can the high standing or high reputation of the slaveholder turn away the force of truth from his crime ; it cannot make *wrong right,* or *evil good.*

Our conclusion implicates the whole American Church, so far as she gives the sanction of her fellowship to the slaveholder. By baptizing the sin, and admitting it to her communion, she *indorses* it, and thus makes herself responsible for all its enormities. She makes, also, in this way, the most effectual provision for riveting the chains of the slave, for aggravating and perpetuating his sufferings. She thus becomes—unwittingly we charitably believe—his cruelest oppressor. Who does not know that a *religious* sanction gives strength and security to an evil which it can derive from no other source ? While the Church harbors and protects the sin of slavery within her own bosom, her verbal testimony against it is of no force. She may condemn it in the strongest language—as the Presbyterian Church has repeatedly done—pronouncing it "intrinsically unrighteous and oppressive," opposed to every principle of God's law and human interest. It is no more heeded than the idle wind. *Actions* speak louder than *words*. *Their* testimony, in this case, contradicts all your severe denunciations, and declares to all who witness them, that this *unrighteous*,

oppressive, and *heaven-defying* sin, is yet esteemed worthy to sit with you in heavenly places in Christ Jesus! Nor will this fruitless testimony of words without *works*, be of any avail to screen the Church from her responsibility to God in this matter. It will be worse than vain for such a purpose; it will rise up in the judgment against her. Out of her own mouth the Judge will condemn her. She has herself adjudged slavery to be "*utterly* inconsistent with the law of God," "intrinsically unrighteous and oppressive." In the name of God, then, we ask, what right she has to give it the sanction of her fellowship? Will she presume to repeal the law of God?—to institute a code of her own for the government of his house, that contravenes that law? Will she presume, in her administration of Church government, to decide that a practice, which has all the attributes of repugnance to God's law that she ascribes to slavery, is yet *no offence* against the laws of Christ's Church?

It has been gravely argued, that Christ and his apostles had no law for the government of the primitive Church, which excluded slaveholders. Indeed? What *was* Christ's law, then, we ask, for the government of this Church? Had he another law for this purpose, than the one which he promulgated from Mount Sinai?—a law which annulled the law of the Ten Commandments? Is not the eternal and immutable law of God the law of his Church? Does the gospel dispensation make void the law?

To say that "slavery is opposed to the law of God," and yet *not* opposed to the law of Christ's Church, is a glaring contradiction. A Church that is governed by *another* law than the law of God, must be *another Church* than the Church of God. And if Christ's Church is a Church governed by Christ's laws—if this is its distinctive characteristic—*to whom, then, we ask, does that Church belong, that has no law to exclude from it a practice which is confessedly* OPPOSED *to the law of God*? A Church that legislates the law of God out of it, by the same act legislates itself into a Church of *Antichrist*. This was the process, as Protestant's believe, by which the Church of Rome went over to Antichrist. The present tendencies of the American Protestant Church are unhappily in the same direction. Papal tyranny found it convenient for its purposes to govern the Church by its own laws, rather than by the moral law of God. Slaveholding tyranny finds it convenient to do the same thing in the American Protestant Church; it claims and secures impunity for a practice which the Church herself acknowledges to be "*opposed* to the law of God." Christ's law of righteousness, so far as it relates to itself, Slavery has repealed—expunged it from the canons of the Church. This seems to be an undeniable fact, and a painful one. The conclusion it forces upon us is no less painful,—which is, that a Church, protecting slavery within its own bosom, *has one of the distinctive marks of Antichrist upon it;* as far as that sin is concerned, it is an *apostate Church*. Just so far as slavery governs a Church, Christ's authority is discarded. It is an enemy that will expel Christ from the Church that harbors it; for what concord hath Christ with Belial? and what communion hath righteousness with unrighteousness? Our American Israel, ruled by this power, is approaching a crisis of fearful moment. This parent of all vices—"the sum of all villainies," according to

Wesley—which she has admitted within her sacred pale, will open upon her the flood-gates of every vice, to her utter ruin, *unless speedily expelled.* The wall of her defence—her discipline—is already being broken down. While she receives into her bosom, and sanctions with her fellowship, and protects with the strong arm of ecclesiastical law, one of the vilest atrocities that ever cursed the earth—that which, in the language of the venerable Judge Jay, of New York, "is of all forms of oppression the most develish ;" what moral force can there be in any of her "*censures* ?" While this grand offence remains untouched, her censure of minor offences will only provoke from men the sneer of contempt. "Ye strain at a gnat and swallow a camel."

In the name of Christ, we would affectionately warn our brethren against the ruin that is coming on the Church. Slave-protecting law, like the law of papal indulgencies, will be found prolific of the vilest abominations. Such a law we are bound to discard. It is a duty we owe to Christ, to the purity of his Church, and to the interests of bleeding humanity. The ecclesiastical authority that would impose on us such a law must be discarded. "Whether it be right in the sight of God to obey you more than God, judge ye"—is the prompt reply of true fidelity to such unrighteous demands. It was this principle that produced secession from the Roman Church ; and the same fidelity to God will *require* secession from the American Church, unless her canon which requires the recognition of slaveholders as worthy communicants, *can be speedily repealed.*

This is the alternative which the providence of God is now placing before us. The question is a solemn one, involving interests and responsibilities of grave moment. We ask for no rash decision. We would have the question decided with our hearts and judgments environed with all the heavenly influences that can be gathered around them ;—with the fear of God and the judgment of the great day before our eyes—with the love of God ruling in our hearts—with the light of his word irradiating our minds—with the aid of that wisdom from above which is promised to them that ask it—and especially with that simplicity of purpose which seeks for its guidance *what the* LORD *would have us do,* rather than the behests of men. Our own minds, dear brethren, are drawn to the alternative before us, with a force which we cannot resist. The American Church—we mean her great national organizations—must be reformed from her slave-holding oppression, *or she must be abandoned.* The apostolic rule, in such a case, is both plain and peremptory : "Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly." Our individual obligation to obey this command, is one which no power on earth is able to annul. No Church organizations can relieve us from it. If a majority of the Church to which we belong cast it off, their example is to be shunned. We must not follow a multitude to do evil. Moral duties are not enacted or repealed by majority votes. If *majorities will* not withdraw fellowship from scandalous sins, *minorities must.* This is no new principle in ecclesiastics. Orthodox Churches indorsed and adopted it, long ago. Who is ignorant of the numerous minority secessions, which occurred in a certain section of our country, many years since, because the majorities adhered to what they deemed a corrupt *faith ?*

And who now condemns the secession, except those whose hearts fraternize with the corruption. Did secession divide and weaken the Churches? This argument was of no weight when the *vital principles* of religion were at stake. *Vital principles* are no less at stake when *the law of God* is trampled under foot, than when the faith of the gospel is corrupted. We can conceive of no heresy more corrupting to the *faith* or the *morals* of the Church than the *slave-defending* heresy. This old leaven must be purged out of the Church. If her *organizations* WILL cling to it, the *true Church* must clear her own skirts from the pollution; for "a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump." If both cannot be saved, then *save the Church* and let go the organization. To preserve the integrity of the latter by sacrificing the *vital principles* of the former, is preserving it at *a ruinous expense*.

The Church must wash her hands from the sin of oppression. It is not merely the 600,000 bleeding victims at her feet, ON whom she has planted her *own* heel, that urge this duty upon her. The THREE MILLIONS of American slaves, with all the wrongs and woes which the vile system inflicts on them and their offspring, and the sea of depravity and pollution with which it is flooding the land—come up also with their appeal, and lay the guilt of all this fathomless system of abominations at the door of the American Church. This Church, the professed pillar and ground of the truth, is the bulwark of American Slavery. A writer of no less grave authority than the Rev. Albert Barnes, lays down this truth with emphatic distinctness. Without the support which the practical sanction of the Church is now giving it, *the system could not stand*. What a tremendous responsibility does this fact devolve upon the Church? Who is willing to *share* in it? Who is prepared to stand up in her ranks, before the judgment seat of Christ, and meet the fearful revelation of this truth which the clear light of that day will make?

There is yet another interest that pleads for the purification of the Church. The Bible and its saving doctrines and spiritual duties, are in jeopardy. They are found in bad company—in close alliance with men-stealers and cruel oppressors. A slaveholding Church is the bulwark of Infidelity, no less than of slavery. To plead the authority of the Bible, in vindication of so vile a practice as American slavery, is the most effectual way to teach men to despise and reject the Bible. "I wish it to be distinctly understood by my constituents and the country," said a member on the floor of Congress, in reply to a biblical vindication of slavery—"IF it [American Slavery] is proved to be a divine institution, sanctioned by the word of God, then I AM AN INFIDEL; but gentlemen must pardon me, if I do not adopt their construction of the Bible on this point." The humanity and moral sense which God has planted in the soul of man, cry out against American slavery and its abettors. The religion which finds a sanction in the Bible, for this monster sin, is a more fatal enemy to that holy book, than a Tom Paine or a Voltaire. Infidelity has no further occasion for the services of such men. The American priest and Pharisee are doing their work far more effectually. Said an infidel, at a convention of free-thinkers in New York—"I have done with the old arguments against Christianity, and have adopted a more efficient plan. Now I work altogether through the moral reformations of the day,

and through them attack religion, and find I can accomplish more than by any other means." The arraying of religion, in opposition to these reformations, is that which gives him this advantage. A religion that sanctions slavery forfeits the support of Conscience and Humanity—its most powerful human allies—and throws away one of the strongest arguments that was ever wielded in its defence—we mean, its purifying influence on society.

Brethren, do we love the sacred volume? Do we love its pure doctrines of grace, and long to see them exerting far and wide their regenerating power, unobstructed by malign influences? Are times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord—the outpourings of his Spirit—delightful to our souls? And can we, without deep concern, behold all these religious interests exposed to the *scorn* of Infidelity, and the *distrust* of sober, thinking men, because they are found in corrupt alliance with one of the vilest forms of sin that ever defaced society? Such an alliance, like that of Jehoshaphat with Ahab, forbodes nothing but evil to pure religion. It paralyzes its power, and thus destroys millions of souls that would otherwise have experienced its saving influence. The American Church, allied with slavery, is in just such a position as her worst enemy would desire to see her. This alliance she *must cast off*, or her glory and her moral power are forever gone! She MUST separate herself from slavery, or the *true Church of God* WILL separate itself from her.

CORRESPONDENCE.

LETTER from the Committee appointed by the Central Congregational Association of Illinois to address the convention on the object of its meeting.

To the Christian Anti-Slavery Convention to meet at Cincinnati, on the 17th of April, 1850 :

DEAR BRETHREN : The Central Congregational Association of Illinois, at their late meeting, February 14th, having under consideration the circular of your preliminary Committee, appointed Rev. Mr. N. MILES their delegate to your Convention, and also the undersigned a Committee to address to you a letter on the grave and momentous topic which has called you together, viz : "*freeing the American Israel from the sin of Slaveholding.*"

Our thoughts respect the following points :—*The nature of your present movement. Its necessity. Its practicability. And whether, if sustained and carried out, it will destroy American Slavery.*

I. A union of Evangelical Christians to strip Slavery of its evangelical character, is a movement hitherto untried. The Boston Society of 1832, and the National convention at Philadelphia of Dec. 4th, 1833, were, in part, composed of men who did not celebrate Christ's death, or hope for salvation through his blood. They proposed "*organizing Anti-Slavery Societies* in every city, town, and village throughout the land," and "The purification of the churches" from the "guilt of Slavery." That is :—they propose to impannel the inhabitants of the country, professing and non-professing, as a jury, to try and purify the church.

This movement, the best, perhaps, then possible, alarmed the timid, offended the worldly professors, and produced some irritation in all. You are *christians* appealing to *christians* to remove slaveholding from christian fellowship. You meet, not to found a new sect, but to purify existing ones—to operate upon each through its own members,—to befriend all by delivering them from the greatest obstruction to their prosperity, and their enjoyment of God's approbation.

Such a movement, wisely and prayerfully conducted, must secure God's favor, and the respect of Mankind.

II. But is it not necessary ? Will not movements now in operation purify the churches and country from the crime of Slaveholding ? We answer unhesitatingly, no. On the contrary, no rational hope of deliverence from slavery exists from means now in use, if we employ no other.

The means now bearing *directly* against American Slavery, are : Anti-Slavery Societies—Political and Religious action—and the spirit of the age.

The Anti-Slavery Societies, of which nearly one thousand were reported and registered in 1837, were in their nature a temporary expedient, and they have accomplished their work.

Nor can we rationally hope that political opposition to slavery will ever destroy it. The politics of the country are *party* politics. And a moral principle in the keeping of a political party will always be set aside in favor of the existence and integrity of the party itself. The party must be kept up whatever becomes of its principles and objects. Thus a party principle in union with a moral one, is a partnership in which the latter will always be the loser.

Besides, the doctrines on which the Anti-slavery political action of the present day is based are defective, and will never oust slavery. To abolish slavery in the territories and in the National District, may be well. To free our General Government "from all responsibility for slavery," may be well: but all this at the expense of an established understanding that we are forever to refrain from moral and religious efforts to abolish Slavery within the States, would be a calamitous error.

Liberty is not a local question. And to limit and localize the moral issue between slavery and justice, is to surrender all reasons for abolishing slavery anywhere.

The politician who promises total abstinence from opposition to slavery on one side of the State Line, cannot oppose it on moral grounds on the other; for there are no local questions in morals. He surrenders also the strength of his political argument against slavery; for whatever may be said, *the slavery which curses this nation is in the slave states.* And if abolition should stop with slavery in the District of Columbia and the territories, it would but take away the collar and wrist-bands of the American Shirt of Nessus which covers, and poisons the whole body politic.

While therefore we rejoice in the application of political truth to slavery, and honor the self-denying men who faithfully apply it; we must rely on something firmer and deeper to eradicate the curse from American soil. Such we hope your convention movement will prove.

It is painful to believe that our Church organizations, and Benevolent Societies, with higher pretensions to morality and humanity, seem thus far (secession bodies excepted,) in the struggle, to have placed the integrity of the organization above the claims of morality and justice. Like the political parties, they have endeavored to oppose slavery only so far as they could do so with safety to the sect; so that in both, those who would place justice above expediency—truth and right above the organizations professedly established to promote them, have been compelled to *secede.* The secessions have done and will yet do much. But the influence of a secession is, for the most part, reactive and specific, affecting chiefly the parent body. Thus the Weslyans but slightly influence the Baptists; and the Free Presbyterians are scarcely felt by Episcopalians. What we want is *a* NATIONAL RELIGIOUS MOVEMENT AGAINST SLAVERY—not a movement which will content itself with prayer, but a movement which will make clean work—whose supporters withhold all support and countenance from the *men,* and *boards,* and *churches,* which shall continue to countenance and support slave-holding, after all rational means of reforming them have been exhausted.

True, it is a most difficult practical point to settle, how long christian patience and forbearance require us to labor to reclaim a brother, or mission-board, or church organization, which upholds slave-holding as among allowed practices before casting them off. God has left that question for each individual to settle for himself according to his personal knowledge, relations, and means of action. But it may safely be assumed that those who understand the subject, and who believe slave-holding to be sinful, are agreed that incorrigible adherence to, or support of the practice, ought to forfeit christian character; and what we want is a christian movement to apply this principle to Churches and Boards—to parties and individuals—in every branch of human action and effort, in this country, political as well as religious, where such application is needed. This, with God's blessing, will remove slavery, *and nothing short of this will do it.*

The missionary piety of a country is its *popular* piety. Bible, Tract, Sunday School, and other subordinate operations, walk in the light of the missionary enterprise, and are merely an expansion and part of it. We have not the statistics at hand but a table showing the sum annually collected and disbursed in this country for religious and benevolent uses, under circumstances which imply the admission of slave-holding to the Communion table, is alone sufficient to keep up the evangelical character of slavery. For every subscriber who pays, and every agent who collects, and every person who receives a shilling of the conscience-fund of the United States, which is raised by that religion which allows slavery to its communion-table, either consciously, or unconsciously, utters a silent confession of his faith that slave-holding is privileged in the church of God.

If the number of professing christians in the country be put at three millions,

and the money raised for religious uses by contribution, at *one million and a half of dollars,* a sum is annually contributed to the support of slave-holding, or a slavery-tolerating gospel equal to fifty cents per head of the membership of all sects and denominations put together! Now while this grand scheme of action continues in full operation, Anti-slavery conventions, prayers, and pious yearnings for the downfall of slavery, are all at a sad discount. They are but the assiduity of the groom who curried and petted the horse while he stole his provender and starved him to death! For action is what sustains religion and what will finally judge it. It may seem invidious to specify particular bodies where a multitude are alike involved. The AMERICAN BOARD of Commissioners for Foreign Mission, and the Home Missionary Society certainly contrast favorably with the corresponding agencies in their sister sects. Their records show at least enough hostility to slave-holding mingling with their counsels to keep the subject in agitation from year to year; yet there is to this day no vote, or rule, or usage of either Board, to keep slaveholders who are unobjectionable in other respects, out of any of their churches at home or abroad, or even to prevent slaves being hired of their masters to labor at the Mission schools where pagan youth are congregated to form, under christian education, their ideas of gospel principles and practice.

The Home Society has, moreover, instead of diminishing, *increased* its slave-holding dependencies during the present year of Anti-slavery agitation. Since 1842, that is, in the seven years preceding the last report: The American Home Missionary Society lacks but five of having *trebled* the slave-holding churches under its patronage, while it has added but little more than *one*-fifth to its whole Missionary force! Such facts certainly show a necessity for a "Christian Anti-slavery Convention," and a rational movement to divorce American Christianity from American Slavery. We want a Board of meek, wise, judicious, determined christian men, who will embark in this business as the Clarkson, Wilberforce, and Macauly Committee did for the legal suppression of the slave trade; *and who will see the thing accomplished or die in toiling for it.*

As to the Religious Sects, it is estimated that the Baptist slaves are the most numerous: that Methodists contribute most to the support of slavery by organization and numbers: and that Presbyterians have furnished for it the most casuistry and perversion of God's word. Since the general Missionary Convention of the Baptists was rent by the slavery question, they have scarcely been known in the Anti-slavery struggle. Since the Methodist "Church South" seceded from the North upon the action of the General Conference in the Bishop Andrew case, both churches, North and South, have been struggling for the southern membership, and the organs of that church have steadily declined from the feeble pulsations which the Church "Advocates" exhibited against slavery prior to the secession of the "Weslyans."

Congregationalists can not easily establish churches of their order in a state where the people are slave owners and slaves. The religion which should propose to give a slave a vote in disciplining his master and expelling him from the church in case of malconduct, would find little favor in a community of slaveholders and slaves. And if Congregationalists regard their churches as scriptural, constructed after the New Testament churches; the fact that slavery cannot bear the discipline of a Congregational church ought to have taught them that it is equally impossible that it should have existed in the churches founded by Christ's apostles. This denomination is therefore virtually excluded from the slave districts.

Having no slaveholding membership, it were to have been anticipated that the State Associations of New England would long ere this have planted themselves upon the obvious and clear ground, that it is contrary to Christ's arrangements for church members to own each other as property. But from causes which operate steadily in every Christian country to emasculate the religious press;—from a pious unwillingness to disturb their mission-boards, with which the present generation of New England Christians have been taught from their cradle to share their earnings—(which boards sustain slave-holding churches)—as well as from the commercial and social influence of slavery itself upon their metropolitan churches and presses, their colleges, seminaries, and leading men;—the New England Congregationalists this day need the influence of a "NATIONAL ANTI-SLAVERY COMMITTEE FOR CHURCH RE-

FORM," almost as much as their sister sects. But the work will be far shorter there: for every sincere Christian in New England is an abolitionist at heart. And if the subject can be presented to him in an unobjectionable form, he will act for a divorce of American Christianity from American Slavery.

The Presbyterian denomination originated amid civil convulsions and war—an appeal to the Scriptures in favor of human rights against ecclesiastical and civil despotism. It is, therefore, pre-eminently a religion of principle. From this circumstance, and from its central position and large slaveholding membership—extending as it does both North and South—this denomination has done and said more about slavery than all others put together. And against the sentiments of the mass of its northern membership, the policy of its assemblies has been painfully uniform. That policy is shortly told. *They have condemned slavery in theory and supported it in practice.*

In 1815, the General Assembly (then united) declared their "approbation of the principles of civil liberty," and their deep "concern at any vestiges of slavery which may exist in our country." This is theory. In practice, they urge the lower judicatures to prepare the young slaves for "the enjoyment and exercise of liberty *when God in his* providence shall open a door for emancipation." That generation are since emancipated or dead. This recommendation is an explicit implied permission to their slaveholding members to dismiss all thoughts of emancipation at present, waiting for some colonization opening, or some undefined providence of God.

In 1818, the Assembly, in words which have been quoted until they are familiar, say they "consider the voluntary enslaving of one part of the human race by another, a gross violation of the most precious right of human nature, utterly inconsistent with the laws of God," etc. etc.

But this whole declaration was followed by a colonization clause which made it wholly inoperative on the consciences, and even the fears of their slaveholding membership. By a fair construction of the whole testimony of 1818, the slaveholders considered themselves as not guilty of "*voluntary*" slaveholding, while they were willing to aid in a scheme of colonization. Thus practice neutralized theory.

In 1836, the Assembly, then about to divide, met at Pittsburg. Alarmed (as they never were by the Assembly's action) by the formation of nearly one thousand Anti-Slavery Societies in the preceding four years, commissioners from twenty-seven slaveholding Presbyteries, and of both the schools in controversy, disregarding all questions of doctrines or measures which divided them, met in open caucus, organized, and "RESOLVED, That if the Assembly shall undertake to exercise authority on the subject of slavery so as to make it an immorality, or shall in *any way* declare that Christians are criminal in holding slaves, a declaration shall be presented by the southern declaration declining their jurisdiction, and our determination not to submit to their decision."

From that day to this, neither Assembly, Old or New, has ever disobeyed the command of that caucus of slaveholding members, "*in any way declaring Christians criminal in holding slaves.*" Hence their menace has never been executed.

At this Assembly (1836) the Old School party was put in a permanent majority by the following means. An article from the *Princeton Repertory* was issued on the spot, from the Pittsburg press—intended, as the title page bears, "*For gratuitous circulation*" among the members of the Assembly. This pamphlet, said to be from Prof. Hodge, and to express the Old School doctrine of slavery, teaches, that slavery was not regarded by Christ and his Apostles as a "*moral question:*" that the subject is hardly alluded to by Christ in his "personal instructions;" and that reviewers say—"we think no one will deny that the plan adopted by the Saviour and his immediate followers, must be the correct plan."

In accordance with the above teaching of the Princeton fathers, and on a report and resolution offered by Dr. Miller, the *father* of those fathers, the Assembly "*Resolved*, That it is inexpedient to take any farther action in relation to the subject." From that day the Old School were in a permanent majority. The slaveholders established that platform.

Next year, 1837, by the famous "excinding acts," four Synods, including a Presbyterian population of some sixty thousand persons—and what was more

significant, containing perhaps nine-tenths of all the active opponents of slavery in the Church—were cut off by the repeal, by a majority vote, of a "*plan of union*" adopted thirty-six years before, in a former generation—casting out all who had come in upon that plan.

This year, 1837, Dr. G. A. Baxter, President of the Union Theological Seminary, Prince Edwards county, Va., suddenly changed sides from New to Old School; and in a printed address thus justifies the change to his New School constituency. He says: "One motive with me for going into the Convention (O. S., which met before the Assembly) was to feel the pulse of our northern friends on that subject (Abolition); and on this point I was gratified beyond my most sanguine expectations. There were one hundred and twenty-four members, of whom one hundred were members also of the Assembly, and among them but two abolitionists!"

Next year, 1838, the two Schools parted, leaving three slaveholding Presbyteries represented in the New, and between thirty and forty in the Old. Since that time, the Old School (which, in the judgment of many, is soon again to be The Presbyterian Church) has abode firmly by the Princeton ground. In 1842, they refused to take the anti-slavery petitions from the table at the request of Mr. Fullerton. In 1843, they laid them on the table "without reading." In 1845, at Cincinnati, they hurried over the subject in less than one hour; adopting a report, that they could not treat slavery as necessarily sin "without charging the Apostles of Christ with conniving at such sin."

The New School body, in 1840, pressed with anti-slavery petitions, avoided action by "solemnly referring the whole subject to the lower judicatories to take such action as in their judgment is most judicious and adapted to remove the evil;" refusing the request of Rev. Geo. Beecher to insert the word *moral* before the word *evil;* that is, refused to call slavery a "*moral evil.*" In 1843, the next triennial Assembly, they censured the action of those Anti-slavery Presbyteries which had excluded slaveholding from their pulpits and communion tables, and requested them to *rescind their acts;* thus condemning them for obeying their own advice or excluding slaveholding from fellowship! And at the last meeting of the same Assembly (N. S.) they declared—

"That there has been no information before this Assembly to prove that members of our Church in the slave States are not doing all they can (situated as they are in the Providence of God) to bring about the possession and enjoyment of liberty by the enslaved!!!"

And that, too, while twenty-seven of the southern Presbyteries, in 1836, without intimating any wish or design but that of perpetual slavery, had forbidden the united Assembly to "in any way declare Christians criminal for holding slaves."

And the pamphlet put forth by a committee of the Synod of Kentucky in 1835, had informed them that "Cases have occurred in our own Church where professors of the religion of mercy have torn the mother from her children and sent her into a merciless and returnless exile. *Yet acts of discipline have rarely followed such conduct.*" Yet the Assembly of 1849 did not know but their slaveholding members were doing all in their power in favor of emancipation!! Surely, this Church needs the friendly labors of A National Anti-Slavery Committee for Church Reform.

III. And there are enough anti-slavery members in every sect and denomination to carry the truth elaborated by such a committee to its heart, by prayer and toil, by petition and remonstrance. Only let the effort be made on a scale commensurate with the vastness of the object. Let scholars be invoked to tell us whether those Scriptures to which custom has assigned the livery of despotism, have or have not been perverted from their true meaning; and let the results of their studies, in some cheap, popular form, be circulated through the land, that the "American Israel may wash in the pool which God is agitating for her cleansing." Let the nine hundred and fifty-four Home Missionaries of the American Home Missionary Society now laboring in the free States, be corresponded with, to see if at least nine hundred of them will not pray that Society to withhold aid from slaveholding churches, and plant other churches in the South which will not become nursing-mothers of despotism. And, if need be, let agents be employed, and a press established, which shall wait continually on this very thing. Let these and like collateral means be prayerfully employed, and we need not linger a moment to show that slavery, stripped of its Gospel robes, must speedily die.

Praying fervently for the blessing and guidance of God to attend your labors, we remain, in behalf of Central Association, Illinois,

Your Brethren in Christ.

J. BLANCHARD,
Z. R. HAWLEY,
L. H. PARKER,
A. S. MARTIN,
A. NEELY,
LUCIUS GARY,
} *Committee of Association.*

The following communications, in answer to letters of invitation sent out by the Committee appointed for that purpose, present the manner in which the object of the Convention is viewed by consistent Anti-Slavery men throughout the country:

DEERFIELD, Me., February 20, 1850.

Gentlemen: A circular calling for a Christian Anti-Slavery Convention, to be holden at Cincinnati in April next, for the purpose of taking into consideration the important subject of slaveholding as connected wih the American Church, and inviting Christians of all denominations to assemble at said Convention, has been duly considered by the members of the Maine Wesleyan Methodist Annual Conference; and the undersigned would hereby inform you, in behalf of said Conference, that it meets with their hearty and unanimous approval. We cannot but feel confident, that the sentiments contained in said circular and the objects of said Convention must meet those of Christians of all denominations, who are real friends to the slave and the cause of humanity.

ELNATHAN POPE,
President of said Conference.

JOSEPH B. JONES, *Secretary.*

From the Congregational Church, East Berkshire, Vt.

EAST BERKSHIRE, Vt., March 14, 1850.

Gentlemen: As none of my Church will be able to attend the Convention in Cincinnati, we send you the following as our testimony against Slavery:

At a regular meeting of the Congregational Church of East Berkshire, Vt., Feb. 3, 1846, the following resolutions were unanimously adopted:

Inasmuch as American Slavery is established in defiance of the laws of God and the dearest rights of man—as it obliges men to labor without reward—as it denies the sacred right of matrimony—as it promotes theft, robbery, licentiousness and murder, and almost every other crime—Therefore,

Resolved, That we believe it to be one of the most heinous and inexcusable of all sins.

Resolved, That it is the duty of Ministers to instruct the Churches, and the duty of Christians to warn the world against this destructive vice.

Resolved, That professors of religion who persist in this sin, after suitable instructions and warning, ought to be excluded from the fellowship of the Church.

Resolved, That we deem it unscriptural and unsafe to promote to office those who tolerate this sin.

P. BAILEY, *Pastor.*

We send you this former action of the Church, to show that these resolutions are not the impulse of the moment, but the settled opinions of the Church, and the ground that we intend to occupy. Voted unanimously, March 12, 1850.

P. B., *Pastor.*

From Charles Osborn, of the Society of Friends.

PORTER COUNTY, Ia., 3d mo., 20th, 1850.

Dear Friends: I approve the plan proposed in your circular for a Christian Anti-Slavery Convention, and hope it may be productive of good. If the Churches can be freed from the sin of slaveholding, the wicked system of Slavery would soon come to an end. That Church which tolerates Slavery ought not to be called a Christian Church, and those Church members that continue to purchase slave products, and vote for pro-slavery candidates, are just such abolitionists as the slaveholders want them to be. It is high time for all who name the name of Christ to withdraw from the grand confederacy of man-stealers.

The present is a time of commotion; the enemies of righteousness are making a terrible rattle, and tormenting each other. Liberty and Slavery are combatants now engaged in severe conflict,—these can never harmonize either in Church or State, therefore one or the other must prevail. As long as Slavery triumphs over Liberty, wo to our country; trouble and great perplexity will be the portion of the inhabitants.

It must be confessed, that the Churches are supremely guilty of the sin of slaveholding; and as "judgment must begin at the house of God," it is therefore the indispensable duty of every one that nameth the name of Christ, to depart from the great iniquity of man-stealing,—make it a matter of conscience to not (knowingly) give it any support. In this way, the Churches may be freed from the sin of slaveholding, and become what the Great Head of the Christian Church designed she should be, "The Light of the world—His instrumentality for the conversion of the world."

Your friend, CHARLES OSBORN.

From Judge Jay, of New York.

New York, 28th March, 1850.

Gentlemen: I have just received the "call for a Christian Anti-Slavery Convention," together with your accompanying letter of the 14th inst. I rejoice in the call, and hope much good may result from it; but that it may lead to good, great prudence will be requisite in directing the proceedings of the Convention. The fourth item in the call intimating the responsibility of each individual Christian for the sin of the organization of which he voluntarily forms a part, is, I think, the rock on which you are in danger of splitting. There is and can be no pure Church composed of fallible, sinful beings. If we belong to any Church, we must belong to an imperfect one, embracing in its ministers and members more or less sin. Our union with the Church I do not regard as *voluntary*, but as commanded by Christ, and needful for the good of our souls. There are great truths irrespective of creeds and forms of Church government. The Methodists and Presbyterians are as much bound by their own doctrines to worship God in public and participate in the Sacraments as we Episcopalians are. Have we a moral right to set aside these obligations on account of supposed or proved sin in the minister, or any of the members of the Church; and if we continue in the Church where the sin exists, do we become responsible in the sight of God for that sin? The answer to these questions depends upon circumstances. If I cannot worship God in public except in a *sinful manner*, then certainly I must not worship in public. I could not join in popish worship, and if I were in a country where there was no other Christian church, I would abstain from public worship and the Lord's supper. But suppose I am residing in Georgia, and the minister and many of the members of the Episcopal Church are slaveholders. I can go to church and unite in unexceptionable prayers, and listen to sound doctrine, and partake of the Sacrament, without in the slightest degree offending my conscience. Is it possible that for so doing I am responsible for the sin of slaveholding? I think not, more than for any other sin of which any of the congregation may be guilty. But do I not, by going to this slaveholding Church, give my sanction to the lawfulness of human bondage? Certainly not, while I protest against it. But do I not at least acknowledge that those with whom I worship are *Christians?* I acknowledge an undisputed *fact* that they *profess* to be Christians, use Christian prayers, administer Christian Sacraments, and preach Christian doctrines. How far they are accepted and forgiven by their Divine Master, it is not for me to say. I have said thus much, to indicate the right and in some instances the duty of Christians to worship in what is called a *pro-slavery Church.* That Slavery is contrary to the Divine will, I have no doubt—that it is of all forms of oppression the most devilish, I freely accord, and as freely that it is the duty of Christians to proclaim its sinfulness, and to labor for its abolition. But the question, I apprehend, to be entertained by your Convention is, not the duty of individual Christians, but their duty as *associated in a Church of Christ.* This opens new and wide fields for discussion. Who constitute a Church? What are the powers of a Church, and how are they to be exercised? Among some Christians, the communi-

cants of a congregation form an independent Church. Among others, the *baptized* are regarded as members of the Church, and a congregation exercises the power through its representatives in ecclesiastical judicature. In some cases, the communicants prescribe the conditions on which other communicants may be admitted. With us no conditions of doctrine or practice are prescribed, as the minister alone possesses the power to exclude.

This diversity in the constitution and powers of Churches renders it impossible for your Convention to lay down any general rule of disciplining or excluding slaveholders from Church membership, without running counter to the rules and discipline and order of some one or more of our religious denominations. I hope, therefore, the Convention will not assume the authority of prescribing conditions for admission to the Lord's table, or pointing out the subjects of ecclesiastical discipline. These are matters beyond their province. But as a body of Christians, the Convention has full right and power to express their opinion that American Slavery is inconsistent with the spirit and precepts of the gospel of Christ, and that it is the duty of His ministers and disciples to expose its unchristian character, and to labor for its extinction; and for this purpose to use in their associated capacity of Christian Churches, all such means as are authorized by their several ecclesiastical organizations.

It would give me much pleasure to meet with you, but the state of my health and my domestic ties, will necessarily confine me at home.

With earnest prayer that a gracious Providence may direct and prosper your deliberations, I am, rev'd and dear sirs, yours, very truly,

WILLIAM JAY.

From Hon. H. B. Stanton.

ALBANY, March 30, 1850.

GENTLEMEN: My duties here are now, and will continue to be, of such a nature as to render it impossible for me to accept your kind invitation to attend an Anti-Slavery Convention, to be held at Cincinnati on the 17th of April.

As the close of the session of our Legislature approaches, the pressure of business upon us is so great as to prevent a compliance with your request (in the event of my inability to attend your Convention in person), to give you my views in writing upon the general subject of Slavery, further than to say, that I deeply sympathize with, and shall heartily concur in, all Christian, constitutional, and legal means which tend to prevent the increase and to terminate the existence of a system which is alike hostile to the rights of the slave and the well-being of his master.

Very respectfully yours,

HENRY B. STANTON.

From the Rev. A. B. Bradford, of Pa.

DARLINGTON, Pa., April 1, 1850.

Dear Brethren: Your letter, inviting me to participate in the deliberations of the Christian Anti-Slavery Convention, which is to meet on the 17th inst., in Cincinnati, is received.

By an unfortunate synchronism, the "Free Synod of Cincinnati," of which I am a member, will hold its next regular meeting during the same week, at a point nearly three hundred miles from your city, and the paramount duty of attending its sessions, will prevent my accepting your invitation. I need hardly say I *regret* this. To see and form a personal acquaintance with the distinguished Christians of so many denominations as will be present, and to hear their discussions upon the subject of "freeing the American Israel from the sin of slavery," would indeed be a great privilege.

As, in case of inability to attend in person, you request my views in writing as to "the present position of the American Church, and the proper course to be pursued to deliver it from the terrible stain which slavery inflicts upon its character," I will briefly and frankly give you my opinion.

That the American Church, with but few exceptions among its sects, is the bulwark of American Slavery, no candid and intelligent man can doubt. In the call for your Convention, signed by twelve clergymen, belonging to eight

different denominations, it is distinctly said—"We believe the influence of the Church to be so great, that no earthly power can destroy this sin, while as now it finds countenance and protection among the professed people of God; and that nothing can save it from speedy ruin, so soon as the Church shall withdraw its support." This sentiment is unquestionably correct, and prepares the way for me to utter the obvious truism, that it is the clear duty of the Church immediately to withdraw its support and let the iniquitous system sink into non-existence. This should have been done long ago, before the pro-slavery leaven had leavened the whole lump. But the grand difficulty now is, that the *majority* in each denomination is either pro-slavery in character, or more attached to *Churchianity* than to Christianity, so that there is left but a *minority* to weep between the porch and the altar. And the question arises—What is the duty of the anti-slavery minority under such circumstances? Happily, the answer to this question is very clearly revealed to us in the New Testament. If Slavery be such a giant crime against God and Humanity as we admit it to be; if it has deformed the character and paralyzed the conscience and energies of the Church, so that even Mohamedanism points the finger of scorn at us; if it not only implicates *us* in guilt, but makes the Church a stone of stumbling to the world and a foster-parent to infidelity: then it is our duty to our own consciences, as well as to God, to cut the sinful connexion at all hazards. Paul says to the Thessalonians—"Now we command you brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly." Also to the Ephesians: "Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them." Now do not anti-slavery Christians in pro-slavery Churches, hold intimate fellowship at the communion table with those that walk disorderly? Do they not hold fellowship with those who practice daily a system which abounds in the unfruitful works of darkness? How clear, then, the covenant to *withdraw!* I know well from experience, that obedience to this covenant of Heaven is difficult, and brings on sometimes great sacrifices of comfort, reputation, and property. But is not the Christian life one of warfare and suffering? What folly, to think of Heaven as a place of *rest*, unless we go up there from a life of *toil*. What presumption, to expect a "*crown* of *victory*," unless we experience in this world the *danger* and *turmoil* of the *battle field*. Pray, what is the design of the visible organization called *the Church?* Is it a great Ark, into which, if a man can only get, he will be saved from the coming deluge of Divine wrath? Is it a widespread, benevolent association, for the purpose of giving bread and moderate employment to a class of men called preachers, who are too lazy to work for a livelihood, or too destitute of talents to succeed in Law, Medicine, or Politics? Is it a mere appendage to civilization, by which man saves the reputation he has enjoyed among his associates upon earth, of being a *religious animal?* Or is it not in opposition to all these, God's own expedient for regenerating a lost world and bringing it back to His allegiance? Is it not the organization set up by God himself, for applying to all the woes and wretchedness of Earth the great remedy of the Gospel? In the days of her unity and simplicity, when her genius was understood, and when the Lord was in the midst of her, did she not overrun the Roman Empire before the close of the first century, prostrating by her power Paganism and its twin sister, Slavery? A Christian who expects to reform the world by a life of quiet and inglorious ease, is only half born into the kingdom. The Church, as she ought to be, is an army of warriors, and fighting is her vocation—not, I admit, with carnal weapons, but with spiritual, which are mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds.

But perhaps, instead of the Anti-Slavery Christians in each denomination withdrawing from the corrupt majority and organizing as we "Free Presbyterians" have done, it is in contemplation by some, that they shall drop their denominational peculiarities and unite upon some common platform of faith, and thus correct the fault of the reformation of the 16th century, and bring the power of a united church to bear upon the kingdom of darkness. Can it be possible, that God is going to startle the bigotries of the world by an event like this?—that sectarianism is to be slain, and that the Church, a new creation, is to march back 1800 years to the visible unity and strength of apostolic times, and thus bring about the answer to the prayer of Jesus Christ, "that they all may be one as thou Father art in me and I in thee, that the world may believe that thou hast sent me!" Oh, how the Angels of Heaven would hover

round a body of men brought together by such desires and such aims! How they would tune their golden harps and strike up anew the glorious anthem which a corrupt and backsliding Church has so long forgotten to sing—"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace and good will to men! This union of the sincere followers of Christ ought to be consummated; but, alas for the weakness of my faith, I doubt whether *we* can do it—whether we can do any more in this generation than to dig the grave of our Shibboleths, leaving it in charge to our children to bury them.

Allow me, in conclusion, to advise that the Convention, composed as it will be of Christians from all parts of the country, send up a Memorial to Congress on the great question of the day. If such a procedure will do no great visible good, it would at least reveal somewhat more clearly to the dull eyes of our public men, "the handwriting upon the wall."

Imploring the presence of God and his blessing upon the deliberations of the Convention, I remain, dear brethren,

Your friend and fellow laborer,

ARTHUR B. BRADFORD.

From Wesleyan Methodist Church of Shelburne, Vt.

North Ferrisburgh, Vt., April 1, 1850.

Dear Brethren: For sometime subsequent to the publication of the call for holding the Convention in your city the present month, I intended to be present, and unite my sympathy in the important movement to free the Churches of the North from the sin of Slavery. But, of late, business connected with the session of our yearly Conference, which is to commence the first of May, seems to render it impracticable for me to make the attempt to execute my previous design. * * *.

The call for the Convention has been brought before the Wesleyan Methodist Church of Shelburne, Vt., of which I am pastor; and the following is their action in relation to it:

"At a meeting of the Wesleyan Methodist Church of Shelburne, Vt., held March 9, 1850, the call for a Christian Anti-Slavery Convention, to be holden in Cincinnati, O., the 3d Wednesday in April next, was read and considered, and the following resolutions were ordered to be prepared for consideration and adoption the following day:

Resolved, That we, the Members of the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Shelburne, Vt., most cordially approve of the contemplated Christian Anti-Slavery Convention, to be holden the 3d Wednesday in April, 1850, for the purposes enumerated in a call issued Nov. 20, 1849, and signed by thirteen gentlemen, representing different religious denominations.

Resolved, That we appoint Deacon Charles Grant, of Charlotte, our delegate to represent us in said Convention.

The above resolutions were passed March 10, 1850.

C. PRINDLE, *Pastor and Chairman.*

Asahel Nash, *Clerk.*

Since the above action was had, Deacon Grant, who is a very worthy member of the Congregational Church in this vicinity, has abandoned the expectation of being at Cincinnati, as he and we anticipated at the time he was appointed to represent us. He will, however, make a communication to the committee, giving such facts as he is personally acquainted with, in relation to the condition of the Churches in these parts; which facts may be confided in as entirely reliable.

That something should be done to effect an entire divorcement of the Churches from the sin of slaveholding, is so obvious, that the question will hardly admit of a moment's controversy. This will not, it *cannot* occupy much of the time of the Convention; but *what* to do, and *how* to do it, will constitute the great and *momentous* questions, that will call for courage, prayer, and the exercise of the soundest judgment. So interwoven has the slave system become with Church *organizations* and all our *benevolent institutions*, and so general has the purpose of our ecclesiastical bodies been to stifle discussion even upon this subject, that, not only with myself but with many others, the conviction amounts to a *serious fear*, that nothing short of revolution can effect the object for which the Convention has been called. If, however, the God of

wisdom, whose presence we shall not cease to invoke upon the Convention, shall point to ways and means to secure the object, that will save the forms of present religious structures, it will gratify thousands who do not commit themselves to this great work, because they fear such committal would compel them to do, as some others have felt constrained to do, leave their present religious associations.

Should the representatives of the Churches in the *great West* meet and leave the poor slave to live on in the agonies of his already long-continued dispair. And should the perpetrators of the bondman's wrongs see that this Christian body lacked the noble daring to decree a jubilee for him, earth and heaven would make a record, the remembrance of which would fill us with self-execrations. But though we would pray that *strong* and *practical* measures might be adopted, we feel, *deeply feel*, that, in discussing the questions that will come before you on this great religious question, candor, forbearance, and conciliation, must be cherished on the part of Christian brethren in the proceedings that will take place.

That the Spirit of the living God, the only adequate guide in this dark prospect before us, may be abundantly shed upon the Convention in general, and each member of it in particular, is, and shall be, the constant prayer of, dear brethren, your co-laborer in the gospel of "deliverance to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound."

CYRUS PRINDLE.

From the Mr. Charles Grant.

CHARLOTTE, Vt., March 28, 1850.

Gentlemen: Through the courtesy and confidence of the Wesleyan Brethren, I have been appointed a delegate to the Convention of which you are chairman. Age and infirmity render my attendance uncertain. Feeling a deep interest, I do myself the honor and pleasure of addressing, through you, the Convention.

Nothing since the commencement of the Anti-Slavery reform, has so much cheered my spirits, and inspired hope and encouragement, as the call for a "*Christian Anti-Slavery Convention.*" All the reasons specified, must manifestly exist. The exigencies of the times demand it; and conspire to make the result of such a meeting of "great hearts," valiant for truth, effective. Perhaps this response, is all that I ought to attempt. But knowing that opposition, or silence, will be the course generally taken in this State, I feel inclined to say some things in the general. Of the Wesleyan Brethren I need not speak—all their sympathies are with you. Not so with the Congregational Churches, the communion with which I am associated—so saying, would be doing injustice, without explanation. If the ministry of this State had taken the lead, the Churches would have been thoroughly Anti-Slaveryized, long, long ago.

If there was now, any way to get an expression from the Churches in this State, their sympathies would be with you (in the spirit of the call,) in large majorities: (let me say, I speak from long experience, careful observation, and mature reflection; and a knowledge of things of which I speak, not limited.) The Churches act, if at all, in accordance with the spirit and direction of their spiritual leaders. Being an obscure layman, it is embarrassing to speak freely and fully the convictions of my mind. I remember the injunction, "touch not mine anointed," &c.

The call clearly implies great delinquency somewhere. It is important to find the seat of a disease before remedies are applied. In the commencement of the Anti-Slavery reform in this State, there were two (and only two that sympathized at all) Congregational clergymen, (prominent men,) that identified themselves *fully* in the reform for some six years. I had the happiness of an intimate acquaintance with them. They were discreet, thorough-going men; and exerted a wide-spread and commanding influence among the "common people." There was an array of influence brought to bear against them by their ministering brethren not easily to be borne. Their zeal gradually abated, "and they followed no more with us." There was great dissatisfaction about this time, with a number of prominent laymen in different Churches, at the tardiness of the Clergy in the Anti-Slavery

reform; something must be done to meet the exigency; (this was about 1840.) The two gentlemen referred to above, had become admirably fitted for a work of "compromise and nullification." Through their agency and influence, a "so called" "Anti-Slavery Convention of the Congregational Churches of Vermont" was called. All the preliminaries antecedent, and the organization of the Convention, were so arranged as to have the results, what seemed to have been designed, an extinguisher.

From that time, as before, and to the present time, no ecclesiastical action has been had that has resulted in any thing practical. Laymen have now and then made the attempt but in vain. The question has been called up occasionally from a different source, apparently for the purpose of keeping up a show of action. About 1843, the Rev. Luther Bingham came into the State from the West; (probably he is not a stranger to the committee.) I had the pleasure of an intimate acquaintance. He appeared distressed at the state of things in matters of reform among the ministry in this State; said "they were fifty years behind the times." To my personal knowledge, he made several attempts in ecclesiastical bodies to have them take some Anti-Slavery action; but *never* succeeded. From all that is apparent, his zeal, if not altogether, is very much abated. A young man, a relative of the Rev. Mr. Bingham, is settled over the Church with which I am associated. Eight years ago, he was known as an out-spoken Anti-Slavery man. With this imputation upon him, he applied to the association for license—and was repulsed. He began to mend his ways, and take a course in sympathy with his superiors, which fitted him for their embrace. I asked one of the leading men in our Church if we could not give some response to the call, in a Church capacity. He replied at once, that a large majority of the Church were prepared to give a decided expression, (favorable,) if the Pastor favored it, and would make a move. Having an opportunity, I incidentally mentioned the subject of the call to Mr. Bingham, (our Minister.) He was altogether disinclined to talk about it. It is manifest, that he was not consulting the feelings of the people among whom he was laboring; but the *foreign ecclesiastical associations* with which he was connected. I will here observe, that through a very feeble instrumentality, and against much opposition from high places, a good deal of Anti-Slavery light has been let in among us on the question of slaveholding: more, perhaps, than any other town in this vicinity. What I have said, and may yet say, may appear to the Committee irrelevant, and invidious. Should all the incidents be given in detail, that have transpired, (of the same character and bearing,) during the time of which I have given a brief sketch, they would fill a volume.

I would by no means exculpate from blame the Churches of which I am an individual member; but I do say, without any qualification, that organized Christian action *cannot be had*, when the ministry do not favor it. I am one of those who believe it the appropriate duty and work of the ministry, to take the lead in every good word and work. They are set as the spiritual guides of the people. They should exert a commanding influence, and claim respect.

Inland as a State—no large commercial towns—comparatively little of aristocracy therefore, the obstacles most formidable in the way of reform, are not found immediately and directly among ourselves, with the exception of our Colleges, and family connection with our southern neighbors. The Committee are acquainted with that fraternization that exists with all the large ecclesiastical organizations, Mission Boards, including all the great benevolent organizations, called "American." It is known, too, that our Colleges and Theological seminaries are controlled by much the same influence. *These foreign influences give the reason why the Churches in this State have remained silent and inactive on this subject.*

Notwithstanding these opposing influences, an Anti-Slavery sentiment has been, and still is, gradually on the advance. Not from any influence going out from the Churches, in their official organs, (considered as a whole,) but from the fact that the question is so prominently before the nation. There is something very significant and peculiar, in the fact, that whilst the Slavery question is racking and shaking the nation, from center to circumference, the ministry and religious journals are comparatively silent—some noble exceptions.

I will give some reasons, or facts, to show what the prospects are, towards a state of healthy action. I have an acquaintance with several young gentlemen, recently from the schools, and who have entered the ministry. Special pains has been taken to know the course they intend to take in the Anti-Slavery reform. They seem (some say it in so many words) to have adopted the course recommended by a leading religious journal, "a let alone, do nothing policy." There is nothing marvellous or strange about it. Were they to attempt any thing tangible, and practical, their seniors and superiors would everywhere frown upon them. I have referred to the influence of colleges and theological seminaries. During the last fifteen years, I have had an acquaintance with a good number of young men, who in early life gave promise of being thorough-going reformatory men. Some that were decidedly out-spoken on the sin of Slavery, gave public lectures, united with Anti-Slavery societies, &c. In *every* such case, the influence of the college and theological seminary has *never* failed to eradicate such notions. They admit that they follow the advice and instructions of their tutors.

I have spoken my honest convictions. My moral vision may be diseased —my powers of discrimination obtuse. Be that as it may, I am as far removed from any earthly interest in the flatteries or frowns of this world, as any living mortal man can be. Still I feel a great desire, according to the talent given me, to labor for the promotion of that kingdom which is righteousness and peace. To live in the exercise of that charity that suffereth long and is kind, and courteous, &c., and attain, and maintain, that meek and quiet spirit, which in the sight of God is of great price. * * *

My heart's desire and prayer to God is, that a spirit of wisdom and grace may be imparted to you, that shall abundantly qualify for those high and responsible duties that you have voluntary assumed. It is a move of no ordinary character. The question may now be considered as *settled*, that an influence for *weal or for woe will be the result of this move. The hand is put to the plough. It is too late to look back.* I trust that no one that has favored the move wishes so to do.

May the good Providence of God, bring together a goodly number of men, filled with the spirit of Heavenly wisdom and firmness—men having on the whole armor of the Gospel—thereby filling them for just "such a time as this."

May the spirit of the Highest overshadow and fill the place where the Convention may assemble ; that no place may be found for bitterness and wrath ; using only the "weapons that God has given—the light of truth and love of Heaven."

May the Lord save us as individuals—save us as a people—save the American Church and nation, from any further attempts to make righteousness and unrighteousness fellowship each other—is the prayer of your brother in Christ. Sincerely and respectfully yours,

CHARLES GRANT.

From Lemuel Foster and Chas. W. Hunter, Upper Alton, Ill.

Upper Alton, March 14, 1850.

Dear Brethren: The call for a Christian Anti-Slavery Convention to be held in your city next month, has at last come to hand—too late, however, for gathering and sending names, as you request, but still, not too late to express an interest in the movement. Feeling ourselves a deep interest in it, we, the undersigned, though personally unacquainted with you, venture to address you, as chairman of the committee, and bid you and them a hearty *God speed* in the effort. Go on, and the Lord be with you, as He will. Go on, names or no names. Depend on it, there are some, even in this unpromising region, that will sympathize strongly in the movement. We fear, however, that few, if any, from here will be at the Convention. We greatly regret, that another meeting, (that of our Presbytery,) in which important business is devolved on *us*, occurs the same week; which will make it impossible even for ourselves to be with you. This we regret, not because any aid or counsel of ours will be necessary, but from the interest we feel in the effort. And we think there are the best of grounds for all this interest, and for the movement which you propose; and that it is now loudly called

for in the Providence of God. We would, then, in bidding your committee God-speed in this effort, make bold to glance at one or two reasons now strongly urging it.

1. It has now become a law, that if the awful sin of slaveholding, which is now making the heavens over our heads brass, and the earth under our feet tinder, and our whole land fit only for an oven glowing with God's fury—if this awful sin is to be put away, even from the Church, it is, we say, clear, that some such movement as this is necessary. It is now lamentably true of large and influential bodies of professed Christians in our land, as you say in your circular, that "they enshrine slaveholding in the Church." Many, at least, of these bodies have now clearly shown, that this is their *policy* and *design*, and that they *mean* to do it. They have locked up this American Moloch in the most holy place along with the law and the testimony. One such body has refused to bring it out to view at all, even once in a year. In another, where it has heretofore been brought out, *last spring* "a very decided opposition manifested itself to any general discussion on the subject." It was there staved off to the last, and though a large number of its connexion called on that body to free their communion "from all participation in the sin of slaveholding," yet, when it was at length admitted, they did not touch that point; but, while thousands in their connexion were holding their fellow-men, and even their own brethren and sisters in Christ, as goods and chattels, to be bought and sold, and murdered, lashed and violated,—and they *knew* it too,—while all this was fact, they coolly resolved respecting those slaveholding members, "*We do not know that they tolerate any of those evils which ought to call forth the discipline of the Church*" *!!!* Well may we call on the heavens to be astonished at this! But the point is, if they did not knew it *then*, when will they know it? Never, *never*, NEVER! Their action is a most deadly quietus to all effort in that quarter.

Then, moreover, in other bodies, where searching measures had been set on foot two years ago against slaveholding, and committees appointed to report last year, nothing decisive was done. In one of those bodies, from which much was expected, the majority report of its committee was a most perfect abortion, merely running over some action on slavery, which had done nothing at all to remove it, and pointing the body to nothing to do. But the report was freely adopted, *nem con.*,—and then, singular to tell, a contrary report, looking to effectual discipline for this sin, was adopted too; and then left to rest quietly with the other. So the body "blew cold," and "blew hot,' and blew nothing at all; and then went back to the embrace of slavery, just as it was when it started two years before! True—to show their boldness at disunion, some of these bodies engage in most pompous shouts, at certain "abstractions" about slavery, where they are sure not to hit any body,—all proving, however, alas! nothing but this,—that they do not *mean* to do any execution. And there is a grand excuse for all this do-and-no-do action on slavery, in the quarter referred to. The principle is broached and carried through those larger ecclesiastical and benevolent bodies, *that slaveholding is not in itself sinful*,—only "the system is intrinsically wicked"—sometimes not that; only "incidental evils"—so a man may use this "intrinsically wicked system," and thus sanction it, and yet be pure as any saint;—don't say aught against him:—And a book has been written by a doctor of much influence there, to enforce and sustain this principle, and it is often referred to, and is now working there, to cut up all effectual action against slaveholding, by the roots. Indeed, it is now made clear, that these large bodies, over the land, *do not aim* to remove slavery, even from themselves, or the church, if they can help it. It is not their policy. Their present policy, and reigning aim, is right against it: it is, to have a *self-preserving harmony*, any how. If "extortion," and that in its most hellish form, as our slaveholding, must be fellowshipped to keep together—why, do it:—right against the Apostles—do it. If remaining *sins* will remove members, keep them—hug them to the bosom of the Church. Don't agitate—don't agitate,—we shall lose members—lose influence by it,—we must preserve our denominational integrity. And so each body must have its own psalm book, and its own newspaper, as its "oracle," and its own separate channel of benevolence. Here is the

grand aim and effort of these bodies now—this is their present policy, and it precludes all hope of their putting away slaveholding from the Church, or any other sin that requires conflict. And if, with all this before us, we rely on them to do it, and wait for it, God will curse us; for it is only a known conniving and consenting with this great sin, on our part. There is, as you say in your circular, a "personal responsibility" in this matter, which we cannot shake off. And God is now calling on individual christians, churches and all, to awake, look after this responsibility, and discharge it. He knows, and so do we, that we can, if we will, unite our christian influence against slaveholding, and to put it out of the church, instead of having it go to countenance it, and keep it there. We *can* do this, and we refuse to do it at our peril! We can do it, and we *must*, and we WILL! And, blessed be God, there are multitudes that are now ready to resolve also, "*we will;*—we can no longer give our church-fellowship to this monster-wickedness." And this is, in fact, the second reason which we had in our eye, why this movement which you propose should be engaged in with great interest and energy. The Lord's people have a mind for it. The way is prepared; God has been getting everything ready. Not only have the world and politicians, almost or quite, gone before the church against this sin, thereby stirring them up against it; but christians and churches are beginning to feel that they cannot be spiritually blessed with it—that if they cherish such iniquity, and so known, the Lord will not hear them—that they must indeed strive to overcome sin every where. They are beginning to sigh and cry for spiritual life—for fellowship with God—for a constant, living, soul-blessing union and oneness with Christ. They are beginning to feel that *identity with Christ,* is the great thing to be sought; and not identity with this, that or the other body, seat, or channel of operation; go where they will. They are beginning to feel, that the rich promises in God's word, of peace and joy and life, and the indwelling of the Holy Ghost, to those who do God's will, walk with Christ, and keep his words,—*mean* something;—that the promised blessings are theirs to seek; and that their high calling and vocation is,—to a fellowship and union with Christ against all sin. Now this is a blessed preparative for such an effort as is contemplated in this movement for putting away this great sin of slaveholding from the church. For evidently, to effect it, christians and churches, who now give their fellowship to countenance and sanction slavery, must take it out of that channel and combine it in another. We suppose this is what is contemplated by the movement. We see not how the work can otherwise be done. And the combination should be a large one,—yes, let it spread over the whole North-west. We believe that Providence has prepared the way for it—that the hearts of a multitude of christians are ready, and that we now need, *and must have—a North Western General Convention of Churches*—established as a regular christian or ecclesiastical body. It must have a broad basis—just as broad as the corner-stone of our salvation, and so, embracing all the different evangelical denominations, and admitting delegates or commissioners from associations, conferences, presbyteries, and indeed all gospel churches. And, while it is formed, and engages especially to put away slaveholding from the church, and takes high and clear and decided ground against that, it must not weaken and destroy its influence by harboring or consenting with other sins. It must be not only an anti-slavery body, but it must be anti-sabbath breaking, anti-war, anti-profanity, anti-civil-atheism, anti-drinking, anti-pride, luxury, licentiousness, worldliness, cheating and fraud, error, heathenism—and, in short, it must be anti-every-thing to the ends of the earth that is Anti-Christ. Its ruling principle and motto must be—*Union with Christ against all Sin!* O! to have such a body formed, embracing all the North-west, would be one glorious achievement in this rebel world! And its meetings should take place annually, and the business in them should be, to bow around the cross, all melted, subdued, washed in the Fountain—to be filled with the Spirit—to get up into the presence of God, and pray and praise and adore, and in this light to see light, and in this wisdom and strength to do all; and thus furnished, it should be further,—to inquire and consult, and plan and labor and strive for the above glorious end of overcoming all sin, and bringing in the promised triumphant reign of Christ on earth.

We repeat it—we think the way is now prepared for an effort of this kind: and this is surely an abundant reason why your committee should go forward in it, with great energy, and with a holy confidence in God. Our prayers will be with that body when it meets. We hope that body will be especially a praying body, seeking and receiving its light from on high. It may be opposed in some quarters—may be suspected and reproached by many; but if its meeting is a meeting *with* God, it will possess an unearthly power that will shake the old bastile of slavery in our land to its very center! And by this, other strong-holds of Satan will also be shaken and prepared for falling down.

Should any organization take place at the Convention, contemplating future meetings, we shall expect, Providence permitting, to be in them.

Most truly yours, for this work,

LEMUEL FOSTER,
CHAS. W. HUNTER.

From. Hon. J. G. Birney, of Michigan.

LOWER SAGINAW, Mich., April 2, 1850.

Gentlemen: Your note of invitation to the Anti-Slavery Christian Convention, to be held in Cincinnati on the 17th instant, was duly received. I thank you for it. Should I be present with you, my feeble health would prevent my adding any thing to your deliberations; but, as it is, it will be in the way of my being even at the Convention.

I supposed, as the church was a watch-tower, its ministers would give the alarm when they descried any evil approaching. I suffered myself to be deluded for a long time, by this expectation. But further investigation convinced me that the church, every where, was in the rear of society, as far as regarded the removal of abuses which had insinuated themselves among them, and to which they had become familiarized. So that, with the exception of small denominations, which I greatly honor for their conduct in this particular, the church cannot disappoint me much in its anti-slavery measures, because I look for so little—hardly any thing, indeed—from it.

I see from the newspapers that Mr. Clay is trying again to compromise the matter of Slavery between the North and the South. His skill and power, and his experience, too, in this respect, I would not underrate, but, as it appears to me, no one can permanently compromise, in this country, a moral question. Mind, here—I mean in the free States—is too free to submit to it. Mr. Clay might, with the same prospect of success, try to make us Roman Catholics or Protestants, as of making us all think alike about human bondage. Even if his resolution pass Congress, he will find that the dislike of Slavery is as great as it ever was, and perhaps somewhat greater, as it will shew that it has befooled those who profess to be wise. Party leaders may conform to his views, but they have never hitherto been in the movement. Their consciences are not active enough, nor do they care enough about liberty for all. What *they* want is the liberty to enslave their fellow-creatures, or to send back into slavery those who are endeavoring to escape from it.

In the same list I place the fugitive bill, now before the Senate. They may pass it—they may increase the penalties—they may multiply the number of persons before whom the captured slave may be brought, but it cannot be enforced. There is too much activity of conscience among us, to allow of its enforcement, any more than of the enforcements of the existing law.

In all countries where the mind of man is unfettered, as it is, for the most part, in the free States, surprizingly rapid advances are made in civilization and improvement. The Slave States have always been a clog to the upward tendency of the free—for, in the former, mind is almost dead, except on a comparatively few subjects, and *they* connected, in some way, with the enslavement of their fellow-beings. The question has now got to this point, and therefore, it gives me but little uneasiness—will the free States consent to be clogged and retarded, as they have been, in their upward aspiration, toward improvement and civilization, by Slavery, or will they put it away? That Slavery will be much weakened by the present agitation, and ultimatly go out, I entertain but little doubt.

It must surprise all reflecting persons, that Slavery should be considered by our legislators as an institution which they may establish or not just as suits their pleasure. But I apprehend, they will find that what is morally wrong ban never be politically right.

That your Convention may be not only an agreeable one, but a useful one, is the ardent wish of your very ob't serv't,

JAMES G. BIRNEY.

From Rev. A. Hopkins, Professor of Williams College, Mass.

WILLIAMS COLLEGE, April 2d, 1850.

Gentlemen: I had the honor to receive your circular and accompanying letter of invitation a few days since. Official duties will preclude the possibility of my attending the contemplated Convention personally. I feel, however, a deep interest in the object of it. I am persuaded of the entire soundness of the ground taken by the committee, "that nothing can save the institution of Slavery from utter ruin so soon as the Church shall withdraw her support." The same thing is true of many other evils. All the multiform secret associations which are springing up in our day, are related to the Church very much as Slavery is. Intemperance and war plead Church patronage. But who shall persuade those, who are implicated in associations anti-christian in their practical influence, or who abet practices of immoral and dangerous tendency, to abandon them? This we may certainly hope to see done in many instances—in instances numerous enough to encourage the most earnest and active philanthropy. That we can expect to see it universally done, is more than I should dare to hope for, without a dispensation of the Spirit more powerful than has been experienced as yet in the church. Moral reformations may take place, but they will be wanting in thoroughness and universality, unless the church can in some way secure that fundamental condition of all radical reform, the presence and power of the Divine Spirit. Our conventions, many of them, have almost any character rather than a *pentecostal* one; and hence, doubtless, one reason why the wheels of progress move so slowly. The moving power is wanting. If the contemplated Convention should turn out to be a mere *speech-making* convention, little good can be hoped from it. Should it prove to be a convention which can properly be characterized as a *praying* one, great good may, in my opinion, be hoped for. What we need on this subject, evidently is, free discussion, under the control of a gospel spirit.

With my best wishes and prayers for the successful issue of your deliberations, I remain yours in the bonds of Christian love.

A. H. HOPKINS.

From Wm. Goodell, Honeoye, Ontario Co., N. Y.

HONEOYE, Ontario county, N. Y., April 1, 1850.

Dear Brethren: Your kind letter of invitation to attend a Christian Anti-Slavery Convention, at Cincinnati, the 17th of April, has just come to hand. Engagements in other directions will probably render it impossible for me to do so, and I therefore avail myself of the opportunity presented, to express a few thoughts on the subject of your intended deliberations. And I cannot better do this than by commencing with a few propositions, which, to my mind, are sufficiently esident, and which only need due attention to impress themselves upon the minds of most Christians, as deserving a prayerful examination.

1. A Christian Church I understand to be an assembly of *Christians*, mutually recognizing each other *as* Christians, and united together for the worship of God, for mutual edification and watch, care, and especially for the concentration of their energies in the *doing of Christ's work*.

2. To this idea of a Christian Church, it is essential that all who, in view of their principles and practice, give creditable evidence of being true Christians, or regenerated persons, should be welcomed to church membership;—and equally so, that all who *fail* to give such evidence, should, after due deliberation and admonition, be *rejected* from church membership. The condition of *entrance into* a Christian Church, and of *remaining in it*, are the *same*;

and no one has a rightful claim to church membership any longer than he *continues* to exhibit creditable evidence that he is a Christian.

3. No member of a Church ought to be excluded from its communion and fellowship without a previous effort, by admonition and instruction, to convince him of his errors or wrong practices, and to persuade him to abandon them; nor until it becomes apparent by his departure from the fundamental truths of religion, or by his refusal to abandon sinful practices, or by the spirit that he exhibits, under admonition, that he no longer gives creditable evidence of being a Christian. But this rule should never be perverted to the indefinite postponement of Church discipline, nor to the introduction of a defective and false standard of Christian character.

4. In order to give rational and Scriptural evidence of Christian character, a man must receive in love the fundamental principles of the Christian religion—must habitually reduce those principles to *practice* in all their applications—must be earnestly intent on learning more and more of those principles, and the application of them in all the duties and relations of life. He must, therefore, welcome, gratefully, *a free examination in the Church* of fundamental questions of Christian doctrine and duty;—he must be willing to examine his own practices, and the practices of his brethren, in the light of the Bible and of the principles therein revealed. He must exhibit a candid and teachable spirit, and welcome *the truth*, however much it may reprove him, and from whatever quarter it may come. He must be actively and lovingly engaged in the service of God and of mankind; and he must be making progress in knowledge and holiness.

5. The right and the duty of a minority, or of an individual, in a Church, to withdraw from the fellowship of the ungodly, is essentially the same as the right and duty of a majority to do the same thing. Scriptural excommunication, excision, and secession are, in nature and essence, the same act. Majorities have no right to exclude those who give creditable evidence of being Christians. Minorities and individuals have no warrant for retaining permanent membership in religious bodies that fail to give creditable evidence of being Christians, and that refuse to be reclaimed. The Divine command, "Put away from among yourselves that wicked person (1 Cor. v.); and the Divine command, "Come out of her, my people," &c. &c. (Rev. xviii, 4), are essentially of the same nature, and rest upon the same authority and the same reasons. Hence,

6. To excommunicate, or to secede, for other causes than forfeiture of Christian character, is *schism*. To fail of doing this, in a plain case of such forfeiture, is unfaithfulness to Christ and *His* Church. Yet neither excommunication nor separation* should be resorted to without previous admonition and Christian labor, as before noticed.

7. A Church is not proved to be a *Christian* Church, because it has an orthodox Christian creed, or belief: nor because its form of church organization is correct; nor because it observes, duly, the outward and appointed ordinances of the Gospel; nor because it was founded in the prayers and by the labors of eminent Christians and ministers; nor because it has been the spiritual birthplace of precious souls into Christ's kingdom; nor because it has still some true and even eminent Christians in its communion; nor because (consequently) some real conversions from sin to holiness take place, from time to time, within her enclosures, or in the midst of her activities. By many of these marks the Church of Rome (which comprises at least *a part* of the mystical Babylon) might be proved to *be*, and to have *been* (in all ages) a Christian Church:—the Protestant Reformation becomes *a schism*, and the command to "come out of her," becomes nugatory and unmeaning. The Protestant Reformers were converted in the bosom of the Romish Church, but *that* circumstance did not warrant them to *remain* in it.

8. The principle of Christian Unity, or the receiving of *all Christians* (as before stated), does not forbid Christians to secede from a corrupt *Church*, though there *may* be Christians left *in* it. The act of *seceding* does not break fellowship with *them*. It invites them to come into a *true* Church and abandon a *false* Church, as Christ bids them.

9. The lowest definition of a *Christian* Church that can be made without

* An amicable separation of *congregations* for convenience, or from necessity, is not of *the nature* of the "separation" here intended.

doing manifest violence to Scripture, is, that it is an assembly composed, mainly, of *real Christians*—that its character and influence, on the whole, are decidedly on the side of God, of Christ, of humanity, of Christian truth, of Christian inquiry, of Christian progress, of the world's redemption from all sin.

A Christian Church must be one that is doing Christ's work. And for this cause "was the Son of God manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil." He was "anointed" (was constituted the Messiah) "to preach the gospel of deliverance to the captives—the opening of the prison doors to them that are bound."

10. In 1 Cor. v, Paul seems to go farther; and to affirm that unless the Church at Corinth should "put away from themselves that (one) wicked person," the Christian character of the entire Church would be destroyed, upon the principle that "a *little leaven* leaveneth the whole lump." (See the whole chapter, wherein *extortion* is mentioned as *one* of the practices, on account of which an offender must be excinded.)

11. A Church cannot be Christ's Church that, so far from being engaged in Christ's work, is actively, habitually, resolutely, and perseveringly engaged in doing or in sustaining "the works of the devil"—opposing all who earnestly attempt doing Christ's work—stopping their ears, and bolting their pulpit and church doors, and all the avenues of intelligence used by them, against an investigation of the subject—refusing to entertain the inquiry, whether they are doing or hindering Christ's work. A Church cannot be Christ's Church that persists in giving aid and comfort to Christ's enemies, and sympathizes with the bloody persecutors of Christ's friends, and the oppressors of his crushed poor ("the least of his brethren"), and assisting to elevate those persecutors and oppressors to places of power—"setting up the workers of iniquity," and refusing to plead for the dumb, or to "deliver the spoiled out of the hands of the oppressor." To say that *such* Churches are *Christ's*, is to "DISORGANIZE" the Church, by obliterating the distinction between the Church and the world.

Such are some of the positions, dear brethren, that I should wish to affirm in your Convention, were I with you, and (if needful) assist to discuss. To enter into the argument on paper, and at this distance, to much extent or effect, especially without knowing how such propositions would be received in the Convention, would not be in place. What bearing such propositions would have upon the occasion and the object of your Convention, you can judge at a glance. I have no new facts to spread out before you in respect to the character of American Slavery, nor in respect to the position of the American Churches—Northern and Southern—in respect to it. The tone of your printed circular, inviting the Convention, assure me—what I could not doubt—that the monster crime of the nation and the position of the Churches in respect to it, have not escaped your earnest attention. Were it otherwise, you would not desire such a Convention. The statement of the problem in your circular, appears to carry its solution along with it! What course remains for Christians, when the religious organizations claiming to represent, to embody, to expound, and to propagate the Christian religion, maintain the position that your circular describes? What can remain, but, in the fear of God and in view of the coming judgment, to demand that such a state of things *shall no longer exist*—that the Churches must speedily *change their position*, or be no longer recognized nor sustained as the Churches of Christ? How *else*, is Christian fidelity to be maintained? How else, are Christian institutions, (already falling into contempt,) to be redeemed from reproach? How else, shall the enemies of the cross of Christ be disarmed? How else, shall infidelity, among our most intelligent citizens, be held in check? How else, shall the rising generation be trained in the reverence of the Holy Bible, and in the fear of the Christian's God?

Will the *honor* of Christian institutions be urged against such a course? In the name of the Church and ministry, of the Bible, and of the Sabbath, will Christians and will Christian ministers plead the *necessity* of sustaining organizations like *these?* Oh! how manifestly does the honor of all these, require that they be redeemed from the reproach of *sustaining Slavery*. Nay, of not being sufficiently wielded against it! For what purpose, and to what end, has God given us the Church, the ministry, the Bible, and the Sabbath, unless it be to *wield* them, as *He* intended they should be,

for the overthrow of all sin—and especially the giant sin of our times? Or what can be more evident, than that the support of corrupt Churches, involves the impossibility and the neglect of supporting Churches of Christ? What else would Jesus Christ *have* us do? "If the salt have lost its savor, it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and trodden under foot of men."

The only questions, as it seems to me, in such an emergency, must be those that relate to the *manner* and *time*. Of the manner, I have spoken in the propositions themselves. Of the time, what shall I say? If two hundred years of Christian (?) slaveholding does not suffice for us, and if eighteen years of unremitting and earnest testimony, amid the thunder peels of divine Providence, (and while the nation is reeling to and fro, like a drunken man, under the tokens of divine displeasure,) be not a *sufficient season of preliminary action*, what hope is there of a more "convenient season," and *when* will the time for vigorous and decisive Christian discipline arrive?

I know not what embarrassments and delays may arise from the artificial arrangements, of human origin, with which the Churches of our times may have fettered themselves. I go back of all these. I point to a more ancient, a more authoritative manual of Church discipline. I point to the 18th chapter of Matthew—to 1 Cor. 5th chapter—to the messages of the seven Churches of Asia—to the command to "come out" of the mystic Babylon that traffics in the "souls of men." And I ask, whether the action of Christian Churches, in the nineteenth century, should not harmonize with these? I ask, whether any usages or arrangements more modern than those of the New Testament, should be permitted to stand in the way of a compliance with such commands? I do not forget that "eight different denominations" are represented in your committee, and that even *more* than these may assemble in your Convention. I hail it as a token of good that this is so. And may I not be permitted, very respectfully and affectionately, to suggest, that the Convention will be likely to agree in the results of their deliberations, and to agree in the truth, very much in the degree in which the several members shall *forget* their respective "denominations" and *remember* that they are Christians, professing to be guided by only God's word.

Will there be those in your Convention (it would be strange and unusual if there should not,) who will be ready to quote the Savior as saying that both the tares and the wheat should grow together until the harvest, and that of twelve chosen by him, there was one that was a devil? Will such allow me to ask that they shall tell you what place their exposition and use of those texts would leave them for any such thing as *church discipline?* If no "tares" are to be excluded, and if even a *Judas* must be retained, for what possible cause or on what conceivable occasion should excommunication ever take place? And will they abide by the result? Let me ask, again, whether (by Christ's *own* exposition of his parable) "*the field*" in which "the tares and the wheat" were to "grow together," was the *Church*, or whether it was "*the world?*" And whether there is *no difference* in the constituent elements of "the Church" and "the world?"

And yet again, let me ask, (in the case of Judas,) whether the all-seeing eye of Christ, or whether the perception of apostacy by his disciples, was the rule of *their* action in the premises? Whether the record in the first chapter of the Acts favors the idea that Judas, had he survived, would have *retained* his church membership and apostleship, from which "*by transgression*" (not by his decease,) he "fell?" And whether an exposition and a theory of church polity can be trustworthy, that would still enrol an *Apostle Judas* among the twelve?

I press these enquiries, because, for, lo! *these sixteen hundred years*, the course of church discipline appears to have been impeded by the supposed precedents of Judas and the tares! From the first dawn of the Protestant Reformation, A. D. 251 among the Novatianists, thence down the long line of their successors, the Donatists, the Paulicians, another name for the Albigenees, the Waldenses, the Lollards, and so on, to the Protestants, the Puritans, the portals of "Mother Church" appear to have been constantly guarded against the ingress of revolutionary innovation, by those potent sentinels of ecclesiastical conservatism—*Judas and the tares!* It seems high time that their pretensions to che h supremacy and church membership, were thoroughly sifted and

disposed of, once for all. If your Cincinnati Convention can accomplish this, it will deserve grateful remembrance in all coming time.

There is another excuse or palliation for the position and course of the existing Churches, that will be likely to claim attention in your Convention. It will be pleaded that the Churches are still in *darkness* on the subject of Slavery, and are waiting for "*more light.*" That the "self-evident truths" proclaimed by the entire nation, three-fourths of a century ago, are not yet understood and believed by "*the light of the world,*" that must needs be illuminated *by* the world before it can proclaim the truth!

In reply to such suggestions, it may be pertinent to inquire whether the Church is *willing* to receive the needed light, and is earnestly *inquiring* and *seeking* after it? Whether the *true* Church may not claim the promise of God who promises to give wisdom to those who ask of him? Still furthsr, it may be asked, whether the new birth be not a translation *out* of "darkness *into* God's marvellous light?" And if so, whether *Chrislians* ought not to be *presumed* to understand those great fundamental truths that are obvious and evident to *all* men; even to the unregenerate, the unevangelized, the heathen? If even *these* (as Paul assures us,) are "without excuse" for their abominable practices, on the ground that "God hath showed to them," by "the things that are made," "the invisible" attributes of his nature, and unwritten law in their own bosoms, that should guide them, oh! what shall we say to the plea that the Churches of the nineteenth century, in America, in the very attitude of "converting the world" and ushering in "the Millennium," are still in close fellowship with oppression, with human chattlehood, with enforced heathenism, with concubinage, and with the *persecution* of the "gospel of deliverance"—and all for want of "*more light?*"—a light, too, that they systematically *exclude* from their sanctuaries, and from their circles of prayer, from whence the petition is going up, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" And how will a "*charity*" that accepts such excuses correspond with the maxims of the beloved and loving disciple, John?—"God is *light,* and in *Him* is no darkness at all."—"If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth."—"He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him!"—"He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now."—"He that loveth his brother, abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of slumbering in him."—"But he that *hateth his brother,* is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes."—Little children, let no man deceive you! He that *doeth* righteousness *is* righteous, even as he is righteous."

Your friend and brother, WILLIAM GOODELL.

From Samuel R. Ward, Boston.

Boston, April 3, 1850.

Gentlemen: I was not at home when your letter of the 20th ult. came to my office. It was forwarded to me by my clerk, but by some delay in the mails for which I cannot account, it did not reach me till day before yesterday. Since that time, I have been more than ordinarily occupied with professional engagements: wherefore, I pray you to pardon the non-answering of your very kind invitation sooner.

It would give me great pleasure to meet the friends of Freedom and of Zion in Cincinnati on the 17th inst. I know that your call will of necessity attract a great many of the truest hearts in your own State and all the free States, and not a few of the citizens of the slave States. To meet such men, and to be profitted by their wise and learned counsels, would be to me, would my engagements allow it, a gratification such as I seldom enjoy.

My opinions in respect to "the present position of our American Israel, and on the proper course to be pursued to deliver the churches from the terrible stain which slavery inflicts upon their character," are the opinions of too humble and obscure an individual to be of any weight in your Convention. But such as they are, you are welcome to them.

My view of the case, may be peculiar to myself, but I regard the churches, the orthodox churches of our country, as having departed from God and the Bible, on the subject of Slavery, and as a consequence they have yielded up the truth on other great vital subjects.

No one sin is more frequently nor more strongly prohibited and rebuked in the Sacred Volume, than the sin of oppression. Of no sin does the Old Testament make more marked demands that the Ancient Israel of God should repent, than of the sin of oppression. And from the first preaching of our Lord and Master, to the last forgiving words that fell from his dying lips, He ever laid down principles, as fundamental to His system of religion, which in their very nature are the directest opposites to the oppression of man, and are also the clearest enunciations of the inviolability of human rights. There is, to my mind, no one point in which the Scriptures of the Old and the New Testaments more perfectly harmonize than in this. Of course, I treat, and hold as bordering upon heresy of a damnable character, those monstrous assumptions which declare the Bible to favor Slavery. I regard this doctrine as one of the saddest evidences of our relapse from the "truth as it is in Jesus." When St. Paul, who knew all about it, says that "the heir differeth nothing from a servant," it makes no odds what translation be given to *doulas*, it is certain that, according to the Jewish laws and customs, the heir and the servant were in the same civil and social condition. To say otherwise, is to contradict the plainest teachings of the Divine Word. So, when the Apostle tells us, that "the law was made for men-stealers," and places men-stealers among the worst and most abominable of all wicked men, it is very near to downright infidelity to say either that the Bible sanctions or that it does *not directly* condemn and interdict Slavery. In too many directions around us, these horrible positions are taken, while in too many others, the Word of the Lord against oppression is made less controllingand authoritative, than the demands of sectarianism. So, it seems to my humble vision, our American churches have indulged an "evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God."

The neglecting the cause of the poor and needy, who have Jehovah for their especial Guardian, cannot be done without involving with it other transgressions of a most alarming, because of a most aggravating character. So to do, is to act most unlike God, most unlike Him, who being "the express image of the Father's glory," "went about doing good," and who demands of us, that we should in this, as well as in every thing else, follow Him. If, however, it is in our heart to neglect, overlook, disregard, much more to oppose, this part of His life and teaching; if, unlike Him, we can suffer the sick and the imprisoned, or any other class of the unfortunate and suffering, to appeal to us in vain for sympathy, prayer, effort for their relief; then is our religion *fundamentally* corrupt, as much so as was that of ancient Scribes and Pharisees, and its corruption flows from the source whence *that* originated. "Pure religion, and undefiled before God and the Father, is this: to *visit the fatherless and the widows in* THEIR AFFLICTION, and to keep himself unspotted from the world." Now, the neglecting of the "fatherless and the widows in their affliction," is the opposite to "pure and undefiled religion," and it is without the power of "keeping himself unspotted from the world." I grieve to say it, but the truth must be plainly spoken, such seems to be the state of the church in the present day. She has refused to be what the Corinthian church was, a laborer together with God on this great subject, and as there is no medium ground betwixt the two; that very refusing makes her the co-worker of Satan. "He that is *not* for me, *is* against me, and he that *gathereth not* with me scattereth abroad," saith He who will judge us all in the final day, by that simplest and most searching of all criteria, "Inasmuch as ye did it or did it not to *these least*," the hungry, thirsty, naked, sick and imprisoned.

It is not strange, then, that sectarianism, respect of persons, pride and avarice, should be more dominant in the church, than are their opposites. These are but the legitimate fruits of our neglect of the "two great commandments" upon which "hang all the law and the prophets;" commandments, obedience to which is indispensable to the inheriting of eternal life, as the Savior taught.

"The course to be pursued to deliver the churches from the terrible stain which slavery has inflicted upon them," is to seek to bring them back again to God. It pleases God "to save by the foolishness of preaching." This must be the means to reclaim "our American Israel." Salvation is in no other name than the name of Jesus. He, and He only, is the Savior of His people from their sins. Let the truth home to their hearts, plainly, kindly, perseveringly, "whether they shall hear or forbear to hear," and trust "Him who giveth the early and the latter rain," for the results. Speak out, in your resolutions and your address, against the crying abominations of that institution,

"truth," as Isaiah did, as Jesus did, and God's pledge is, that the "word shall not return to Him void."

I cannot but hope and pray, that great and good results will flow from your Convention. God is always pleased with our efforts to draw nearer to Him, and to reclaim our wandering brethren. May His smiles attend you, and His Spirit guide you.

In Christian bonds, your obedient servant,
SAM. R. WARD.

From the Rev. J. B. Walker and others, Chicago, Ill.

Chicago, April 2nd, 1850.

Brethren: Your note of invitation was received on Saturday. I shall be happy to attend your committee of consultation on the 17th, if I can possibly arrange my affairs so that I can leave so soon.

I shall heartily co-operate with you in the objects of the convention. During the last three years, I have maintained my connection with organizations tolerating or fostering slavery, only in the hope that there was sincere intention to expel the evil so soon as it could be accomplished by reasonable and righteous means. The last meetings of the General Assembly [N. S.] and the American Board, have convinced me that such intention does not exist in the governing influences in those organizations. I committed myself to the doctrine contained in the enclosed resolutions three years ago. The Churches of the north-west have taken very generally the same position. The convention comes just in time to give us the counsel of Christian brethren in relation to just those questions of duty which are now pressing themselves upon our attention.

We have had a meeting in this city, at which we adopted the printed resolutions which I enclose. We send them to the Churches in this region in order to keep them firm, and prepare them to hear the voice of the Convention when it shall speak.

The resolutions contain my views of the principal question of duty. I introduced resolutions of the same kind into the Western Convention of Presbyterians and Congregationalists, held in this city two years since. Dr. Green, of the American Board, approved the sentiment at that time.

Fraternally, J. B. WALKER.

"Call for a Christian Anti-Slavery Convention at Cincinnati, to be held on the fourth Wednesday in April.

A meeting of friends to the above call took place on the 22d inst., in the lecture room of the First Presbyterian Church in this city, for the purpose of electing delegates to attend the above named Convention, and to draft resolutions expressive of their sympathy with the cause.

Philo Carpenter, Esq., in the chair, and Samuel Brooks, Secretary.

Rev. J. B. Walker, a Committee appointed for the purpose, reported the following preamble and resolutions, which were, on motion of S. Brooks, seconded by Rev. L. H. Loss, unanimously adopted:

Whereas, Having seen with deep solicitude and regret, a disposition in some of the Judicatories and Boards of our Churches, to recede, instead of advance, from the position taken by them in years past; and that in order to carry forward the benevolent reforms, in which God has called his people of this age to engage, against the open and covert opposition which all efforts to expel sin from the world and the church will meet, vigilant, concerted and prayerful effort is necessary—therefore—

1. *Resolved,* That the sacred obligations and sanctions of our holy religion, which bind us, as we love Christ and hope for his favor, to labor for the enlightenment and moral interests of our fellow men—especially for those who are deprived of the Word of God, and of all their natural rights, require, that every professed Christian who has the principles of gospel charity in his heart, should at this crisis arise and stand against the reaction which has arisen against Gospel love and civil liberty in the bodies spoken of, and which, if successful, would merit the reproach of the world and bring shame upon the name of our American Churches.

2. *Resolved*, That we heartily respond to the call for a Christian Anti-Slavery Convention, to be held in the city of Cincinnati, on the fourth Wednesday of April ensuing—that we will appoint delegates to the same, and urge the attendance of Christians residing in the North-West, at that Convention.

3. *Resolved*, That we coincide with the views expressed in the call of the Convention.

4. *Resolved*, That while we rejoice in the progress of free principles in connection with the civil institutions of our country, and among the masses of the people, yet, there is reason to fear, that slavery, driven from favor, in the State, may find apology and peace for its abominations in ecclesiastical judicatories and in the Churches of Christ; and that in view of such indications, every Christian should maintain firmly the ground assumed in the past progress of the Anti-Slavery reform, and continue to advance, trusting in Christ, to the point where the demon of slavery shall be expelled from confidence and communion in our churches.

5. *Resolved*, That when the judicatories and Boards of our churches refuse to apply the laws of Christ's house to those who hold their fellow beings in bondage; when their action recognizes those as in good standing who voluntarily hold and treat men as property; when such organizations tend rather to prolong, than to destroy, the existence of slavery; in such circumstances, it is the duty of those who support these organizations immediately to reform them; and if efforts to reform have proved hopeless, duty to Christ, the Divine Reformer, requires that Christians should cease to co-operate with those whose measures tend to sustain rather than to remove a system, the principles and practices of which, are in direct hostility to that Gospel which we are required to love and propagate in the world.

The following gentlemen were elected as delegates:

Rev. A. M. STEWART,
J. B. DOGGETT,
S. BROOKS,
C. N. HOLDEN,
J. MEEKER,
C. DeWOLF,
Dr. BRINKERHOOF,
PHILO CARPENTER.
Rev. J. B. WALKER,
P. THURBER,
G. F. FOSTER,
T. B. CARTER,
Mr. JUSTICE,
S. M. JONES,
S. HOWE,

Signed, S. BROOKS, *Secretary*.

Chicago, March 26, 1850.

From Hon. Gerrit Smith, Peterboro', N. Y.

Peterboro', April 4, 1850.

Gentlemen: On my return home, after an absence of more than three weeks, I find, among two hundred letters on my table, your own highly esteemed one. I am compelled to make my answer to it very brief.

Necessary attention to my private business will prevent my compliance with your kind and urgent invitation.

God grant that your Convention may be made up of earnest, self-sacrificing persons. If it be, it will shake American Slavery to its center.

Suppose your Convention should honestly and heartily commend to all abolitionists to refrain, 1st. from consuming the products of slave labor—2d. from voting for slaveholders, or for any persons who will vote for slaveholders—3d. from attending upon the ministry of such as are not out-spoken abolitionists—4th. from giving a pro-slavery construction to the Federal Constitution—5th. from admitting that such a matchless abomination as slavery, is capable of legalization—suppose it should do this—would not such an utterance have power, great power, in every part of this thrice guilty land?

I wish your Convention would call upon abolitionists to supply the lawyers of their respective counties with Lysander Spooner's perfectly unanswerable Argument on the Unconstitutionality of Slavery.

In haste, your friend,

GERRIT SMITH.

From C. P. Grosvenor, of Central College, N. Y.

McGRANVILLE, N. Y., April 5, 1850.

Highly respected Brethren: With feelings of deep interest, I embrace the earliest opportunity to reply to your letter of 20th March, inviting my attendance at the Christian Anti-Slavery Convention, to be held in Cincinnati, on the 17th inst. The call for the Convention has deeply affected me. For several years it has been my settled conviction that to Christians pre-eminently belongs the work of relieving this country and the world of the unutterably sinful practice of enslaving and holding in slavery a portion of God's children. The call most philosophically reasons, that "no earthly power can destroy this sin, while, as now, it finds countenance and protection among the professed people of God."

Since Divine Providence obviously requires my presence at home, * * * permit me to offer a few thoughts on this argument of the call—it being, as it appears to me, *the* argument not only for your Convention, but for awaking millions of sleeping professors of Christianity from a criminal stupidity to a state of most reasonable anxiety and alarm. For, what other class of men may be expected to move in any case involving a question of moral reformation or the removal of a moral evil, in advance of Christians? Unregenerated men read in the scriptures, and hear it asserted from the pulpit, that Christians "are the Light of the world:" and, though they are by no means predisposed to adopt sentiments adverse to the carnal mind, which cannot be subject to the law of God, when announced by the preacher and sustained by the pious, they *are* predisposed to second whatever of error and wrong which promises to themselves personally, or their class in general, impunity in worldly indulgences and selfish gratifications:—so, an easy, yielding, accommodating religion is desired by them, if they must tolerate any; and pliable Christians are joyfully acknowledged by them to be the best exponents of such a religion, in case any of their neighbors are inclined to make a profession. * * * If these things are so, then, negatively, professors need only to tacitly connive at a sinful practice, in order to be accounted its abettors and made the co-workers and friends of its perpetrators:—but, positively, when the open evil-doer observes that practice adopted by professors of the Christian religion, and openly defended by them as right and authorized by its Divine founder, they feel a two-fold support, and joyfully exclaim—"So would we have it!—such is the religion, and such are the professors for us!" * * * I will not undertake to show in how many ways such countenance is given; but simply state my belief that in no other mode is such support so sinful, or so glaringly and shamefully evinced as through those organizations which, being known to the whole world and influencing the many, ought to be more pure, and to exhibit more strongly the righteousness and benevolence of the Gospel. I mean *Missionary Societies*. By these, if their labor is at home, American Slavery is fortified and extended on our own soil:—if their labor is abroad, in foreign countries, American Slavery is liable to be propagated under the sanction of that Christianity they so solemnly and earnestly commend to the Heathen; and such slavery as Heathenism has created is strengthened in those dark lands. Suffer me, then, to suggest, that neither does the individual professor, nor the single Church, giving countenance to slavery, require so cogently the concentrated wisdom and pious solicitude of your important Convention, as do the organizations I have spoken of. Love should, indeed, and, I cannot doubt, will prompt every sentiment you may utter, and control every act you may do: but the simple feeling of kindness fills not the whole circle of love. Love to God, and impartial love to mankind, will not unnerve your arm from dealing the merited blow against a wrong which, to pamper one portion of the race, reduces to commodities of merchandize, and wields as instruments of sinful self-indulgence, another portion of the same race of rational immortal beings, equally capable of improvement, and equally susceptible of enjoyment and of pain. There is no respect of persons with God: why shall there be any with those who are followers of God as dear children?

No member of your honored Convention needs to be told that no other moral wrong affords to its perpetrator so numerous, so direct, or so powerful

contributions to pride, luxury and ease, as slavery. While pride fosters the love of arbitrary power, this power reciprocates the favor, by securing for pride the means for its own indulgence. Illustrations appropriate here, are furnished with lavish copiousness, in what is called *Patriotism*, which is, in reality, no other than selfishness nationalized: the worst men may, therefore, be found among the most zealous of Patriots. Nay, what wicked man ever yet hated his native land, until "he felt the vindictive halter draw ?" Slavery-supporting patriotism is identical in the principles on which it lives, and in the feelings from which it springs, and by which it is defended.

These things being assumed, (for I assume them as either self-evident or evinced by facts known to all,) it is inferable, that both Northern and Southern defenders of slavery are alike, if not equally guilty of sin; and that, therefore, Northern Christian professors, who give it their countenance, as certainly sustain it, as do those who live at the South and are holders of slaves. Another inference seems no less logical—viz: that Northern Christians may not, in duty, owe it to their fellow professors, who do give the evil any species or measure of support, to have no fellowship with slaveholders in the wrong, but to rebuke the sin with all affection and boldness. But we have here to take notice of the humiliating and alarming fact, that a vast majority of nominal Christians embodied in the Churches, of nearly every name, at the North, do not rebuke the sin, but do, practically, give it their countenance. Next to missionary organizations, on the score of injurious influence, may, perhaps, be reckoned the Literary institutions of America. In them are generally educated the laborers in the missionary field. These institutions ought, then, to be free from moral impurity: but how they have treated the colored man you are fully apprised. It might seem invidious, if I were to attempt to fasten the charge of corruption on the Colleges and Theological Seminaries, and I, therefore, submit this matter to your candid judgment, without offering any testimony.

May I not, however, without incurring the imputation of arrogance, invite your attention to the fact that, in the New York Central College, are assembled, on terms of perfect equality, representatives of three classes of the human family ?—I mean the African, Indian, and Anglo-Saxon. The distinctive terms "colored, red, white," are not used by us, they having become obsolete. The experiment is a triumphant proof that Christian love and impartiality are able to dispel all unworthy prejudices, though they may have been fostered by slavery, their immediate parent, for many ages. If you could inspect our recitation-rooms and chapel, and the *studios* of the pupils, and sit down at the tables of our Boarding-hall, you would both see and feel the truth of this representation. We ask you to pray for the institution and to give it your favor, so far as it is meritorious. * * * Without encroaching further upon your time, and invoking upon the Convention the blessing of Him you serve and delight to honor, I am your humble fellow-laborer,

CYRUS P. GROSVENOR.

From Elder Nath'l. Colver, Boston, Mass.

2 Province Court, Boston, April 6, 1850.

Dear Brethren: Your kind letter of invitation to attend the Christian Anti-Slavery Convention was duly received. It would give me great pleasure to be present with you. The object for which that meeting is called,—the removal of the reproaches now heaped upon the church, and her duty to crushed and bleeding humanity,—will, I am quite sure, bring together a company of christian brethren, with whom I should love to associate, and beget discussions in which I should love to participate. But the great distance to travel, and my pressing labors at home, will deprive me of that pleasure.

With my kindest sympathies and humble prayers that the blessing of the God of the oppressed, of justice, and of grace, may rest upon all your deliberations, in answer to your request, I submit for the consideration of the meeting, the following sentiment, accompanied by a few brief and hasty remarks, and subscribe myself yours, for the oppressed.

NATH'L COLVER.

To the Chairman of the Christian Anti-Slavery Convention, to be held in Cincinnati, April 17, 1850.

Dear Sir: Prevented as I am by the Providence of God from being personally present at your interesting convocation, will you allow me, through you, to present for the consideration, and if concurred in, the adoption of the meeting, the following sentiment, and to accompany the same with a few remarks:

Resolved, that any man who holds slaves, or is a defender of American slavery, is not entitled to the name of a disciple of Christ, or to a place in the church of God; and that whatever church, or body of men claiming to be such, shall tolerate such connexion, or such assumption of the name of Christ, they do thereby compromise the honor of Christ, and the glory and efficiency of his Church, by affording shelter and sanction to a sin unsurpassed in the obviousness of its character, or in the atrocity of its guilt; and that, therefore, the honor of Christ, and the cause of our holy religion, demand that all such individuals and bodies of men, should be held, as the ancient leper was held, "apart from the camp of Israel," until cleansed of this more certain leprosy of the soul.

Let us consider a moment what is implied in the saying of our Lord, "ye are the light of the world." Does he mean any thing less than that the moral light which the world needs is to be seen in the church, and to shine out from them to the enlightenment of the world? If this be the meaning, then nothing should be tolerated in or sanctioned by the church which it is not meet the world should copy after. Commissioned of her Lord to enlighten and purify the world, and to fill it with righteousness and peace, the standard of her faith, sustained by her discipline, must make no compromise with sin. She must lend the sanction of her fellowship to no system of outrage and wrong. No doers of violence to the rights of men must find a home in her bosom or countenance in her smiles. Her Lord will not consent to be the "minister of sin." If the standard of her morals be made to conform to the standard and maxims of the world's morality, then will she be powerless in her mission. Above the standard of her own morality she can never expect to raise the world.

If it be admitted that slavery is an immorality—an outrage upon the rights of our common nature; if it be a violation of that law which declares, "thou shalt love thy neigbor as thyself;" if such be slavery, then is fully sustained the truthfulness of the resolution which I have offered. And it should meet a cordial response from the heart of every disciple of Christ, and from every church which claims allegiance to him as King. This result is so obvious as to be admitted by the most able advocates of slavery. "If slavery be sin," says Dr. Fuller, in his discussion with Wayland, "it should find no shelter in the church of God; it should be put away, at whatever cost." (I quote from memory.)

That slavery is a sin, I need not now stop to argue. The law of God commanding us to love our neighbor as ourselves, proclaims it such. The law demanding the life of the man-stealer, proclaims it such. The conscience of the civilized world cries out against it as such, and the mildew and blight upon the minds and morals both of the victim and the oppressor, wherever it prevails, proclaim it such. And if there yet remains a doubt, I will appeal to the slaveholder himself, and he shall confess it such. What man among them would not sooner, far sooner, see his son, his daughter, his wife, or his mother, bound in the fetters of death than in the bonds of slavery? The glosses by which his pride of race, or his selfishness seeks to hide its guilt from the sight of his fellow-men, do dot prevent them from perceiving its inherent atrocity of character, much less will they hide it from the eye of that God before whom these distinctions vanish, and all stand upon a level.

And yet, with all its self-evident abominations in the eye of God and humanity, it is cherished in all the churches of all denominations of the South to a greater or less extent. Their most able ministers are its strongest advocates. By them the Bible is prostituted to its *hateful* defence. With them it is no objection to one in the sacred ministry that he holds slaves, and treats his fellow disciples, "who have skins not colored like his own," like the brutes that perish,—that he reckons their value in dollars and cents,—that he exposes them to more than the liabilities of other chattels. For while he holds them as slaves, they are liable to be attached and sold at vendue,—to the disruption of all domestic and God-sanctioned ties, and to be prostituted to such uses as the lustful or wrathful caprices of an unselected purchaser may doom them.

Whatever personal exceptions there may be, on all the churches of all denominations of professed christians at the South is this hateful plague spot to be seen. The plague of this "fritting leprosy" is upon them.

Now is it not obvious, if the churches of the North would be clean from this sin, that they must hold all such churches, ministers and men, apart from them as unclean until they shall themselves put away this unsurpassed iniquity? For their cure God does not hold us responsible; but to keep ourselves unspotted from their iniquity, he does hold us responsible. If they be received among us as the worthy disciples of Christ; if they be made welcome to our communion tables and to our desks, it will be understood by the world as an endorsement of their iniquity. *Their* leprosy will defile *us; their* reproach will cleave to *us;* our own sincerity will be questioned, or the religion which we profess will be denounced as a system of heartless superstition and injustice. We may complain of injustice when this cry is raised against us, but our want of fidelity to the King in Zion raises the cry. Our holy religion and our names may be blasphemed, and blasphemers may have their own guilt, but chiefly at the door of the church will the blame rest, if this manifest, this hated iniquity be cherished within, and the doers and abetors of it be held in our fraternal embrace. In the sight of God we shall be responsible for their infidelity. We have assumed to be the light of the world, and have called their attention to the pure shining of our holy religion. They look, but to their astonishment they behold darkness. Instead of righteousness and peace, they behold iniquity sanctioned there, at which unchristianized humanity lifts up its hands with horror. With such an exhibition before them, why should they not be infidels? Fully do I believe it will ever be found that just in proportion as any church has identified itself with this sin, its influence for good has been prostrated. Whatever men may say, there are none so blind as not to perceive the inherent sinfulness of slavery. And while men of the world who are involved in it are pleased to be sheltered under the approbation of the church, they themselves are not insensible to the hypocrisy and injustice of such a concession in their favor, and inwardly despise such accommodating christianity. And men of the world, not involved in that particular sin, are glad to find an occasion of just reproach upon a religion and church whose rebukes they feel and resent in other respects. Both these classes of irreligious men will have *their* sin to answer for in the day of judgment; but that professor, or that church, who by such connivance at sin affords such an occasion of reproach, will at last find the greater sin lying at their door.

Now, in view of all these facts, it is quite obvious, that to be clear in this matter, the churches of the North must do two things.

First, *they must dissolve all fraternal connexion with the churches of the South.* This may seem hard, but nothing short of this can release them from that just reproach which is bearing down all the churches of the South, and *fast making them the scorn, a by-word and a hissing of the civilized world.* If the churches of the South will still cleave to that accursed thing, despite the inward working of their own convictions, despite the appealing throbs of crushed humanity around them, despite the entreaties of their brethren, and despite the wamings of their God; if their altars and their ministry must be kept reeking with the blood of slavery's victims, and steeped in those pollutions which are inseparable from slavery, then *on them* rest the responsibility of so painful a step. It will be theirs to reflect upon the fact that they themselves have driven the churches of the North to this unchosen and *too patiently delayed* alternative.

Secondly, the churches of the North must collectively and individually keep their testimony so distinct and unequivocal against the sin of slavery, as not to be mistaken or *misinterpreted* on the subject. Such a testimony is demanded by their past fraternal connexion with the Southern churches.

Such a testimony is also demanded by a natural tendency in the world to hold churches in one part of the country responsible for what may be tolerated in churches of the same faith and order in any other part of the world. The Northern churches, in the world's estimation, will inevitably be involved in the sin of Southern churches unless released on their own *distinct* disclaimer, without which the world will not discriminate.

Such a disclaimer and testimony they are, in faithfulness to Southern professors of religion, and especially to the dumb and friendless and helpless victims of that system which has its strong-hold its life and being, mainly in

the *time-serving christianity* of the South. And finally, they owe it to that high commission received from their Lord of unceasing aggression upon the works of darkness and sin, until the earth is filled with righteousness and peace.

These two things accomplished, the Churches of the North will be clear in this matter. Short of this, they will not be clear. To reach this accomplishment may "cost" much,—to falter in the effort is to consent to the defilement of the Temple of God, and to incur his frown, a terror more to be dreaded than the rage of oppressors. But what *Christian* shall shrink a moment at the cost? The smiles of the God of the oppressed and the ultimate sympathy of all the good, shall more, a thousand times more than compensate for all the sacrifices which fidelity to the gospel of Christ may have demanded.

Well may I lay my all
Upon *thine* altar, Lord.
The sacrifice, however great,
My soul can well afford.
Let me but call thee mine,
And in thy favor share,
I'll part with all; my life itself
Shall not be held too dear.

From Mr. A. L. Post, Montroze, Pa.

MONTROZE, Pa., April 11, 1850.

Gentlemen: Your letter, soliciting my presence in the Christian Anti-Slavery Convention, to be held in your city on the 17th of the present month, and participancy in the deliberations of that meeting, has been received. I was not insensible of the honor of being thought of, in connection with the objects of such a convention, and immediately resolved, should circumstances in the Providence of God permit, I would enjoy the feast to which you invited me. I have strong desires to be with you on that occasion, and yet circumstances seem clearly to forbid. Having been for weeks connected with a powerful revival of religion in this place, I have neglected all preparation for such a trip, until it is entirely too late to think of taking it, and almost to write. This line I fear will not reach you before the close of the convention. Had I time I should write, as the committee request, my views of the position of the churches, and the proper course the convention should take to meet the evils growing out of their connection with slavery; but I have not. I regret it. I will only say that I deem the 4th item in the call for the convention, to be of vast importance. The question involved is of "grave import." I do not see how it can be answered, otherwise than affirmatively, even if it should result in cutting us off from Church and State. I speak of this particularly, because I think it *the* important suggestion. I agree with the sentiments of the call, and would be glad to be present at a thorough discussion of them, as you will doubtless have in the convention.

* * * You have my prayers that God may bless the members of the convention and direct them in their deliberations and actions, so as to honor Him, and promote the best interests of the slave.

Yours, &c., A. L. POST.

From Rev. Henry Cowles, of Oberlin College.

OBERLIN, April 11, 1850.

Dear Brethren: My heart rejoices exceedingly in the prospect of a full and strong-hearted gathering of Christian men, on the 17th inst., to consult on the duty of Christians in respect to slavery. May their action and their testimony be such as the God of the oppressed will approve.

It would give me very great pleasure to be with you; but sickness in my family, and special business of great public importance, and of critical interest in this place, forbid me this pleasure. Thus detained, I take the liberty of substituting in place of personal attendance, a few suggestions, which may or may not be used publicly.

1. The general sentiment of the age, uttered by both good men and bad men, is affirming, with growing unanimity and power, that *American Slavery is a sin*;—not only a social and political evil, but a SIN.

2. If American Churches deny this doctrine scripturally, or ignore this sin ecclesiastically and fellowship it fraternally, they cannot thereby shield the system or its abettors; but will only paralyze their own moral power and forfeit the respect of the age.

3. One of the greatest practical questions of the times is, doubtless, this: will our professed Christianity take and maintain its position in the front ranks of all real reform? Will she confirm her credentials by evincing that her heart is true *to the highest good of man*, and that, through her agency, "the gospel is preached to the poor?"

4. The position of the N. S. General Assembly, embracing two main points, viz: (1.) that we deem American Slavery sinful, and those who act under the system or abet it, sinners; and (2.) that we are not aware of any such sin within our bounds, is open to most serious objections; it being the position of an enlightened conscience, admitting the *demerit*, but blinding itself to the *fact* of sin. *Ought* not the N. S. Assembly to know that this sin is avowedly tolerated within its bounds? Can any position be morally more perilous than that of being "willingly ignorant" of the presence of what is known and admitted to be sin?

5. But this protesting against American Slavery is invested, it is said, with great difficulties. So is resistance against any form of sin. Is it urged that this sin is "organic" and not individual? It is *not*, in such a sense, organic that it cannot attach to every individual slave-holder, slave-trader, or slave law-maker. No matter how many "hands join in hands," the wicked shall never, before God, go unpunished.

Is it urged that our testimony against all slaveholding infringes upon Christian charity and does injustice to the many good Christian brethren who hold slaves? We answer—those brethren, however ostensibly good, *should be rebuked*. If they are *really* good, they will receive the rebuke both kindly and thankfully.

Again, the degree of subjective sin involved in slaveholding turns before God, on the amount of light sinned against. Of this, we cannot and would not judge. But, assured of the objective sin of slaveholding, we may not forbear to "rebuke our brother"—we must not "suffer sin upon him."

Again, when the claims of tenderness and Christian charity go the length of apologizing for iniquity and throwing a cloak over objective sin, the counter claims of righteousness, purity, reform, fidelity to professed brethren and fidelity to our common Lord, must be deemed paramount. To sacrifice the latter to the former, is to paralyze all discipline and prostitute all true piety.

I close with barely suggesting the hope that these and similar principles will be carefully considered by the brethren convened in your city, and if deemed truthful, will modify both our ecclesiastical relations and our moral position as developed in our benevolent societies.

For a pure gospel, yours, fraternally,

HENRY COWLES.

From Rev. S. S. Jocelyn, of New York.

NEW YORK, April 13, 1850.

Gentlemen: Your circular and letter inviting me to attend the Convention to assemble on the 17th inst., was duly received. The object is one which deeply interests my mind. It is truly Christian, and no doubt dear to the great Redeemer. Why not to all that profess to be purchased with his blood?

It would afford me great pleasure were it in my power to be present with you all, and share with you the duties and responsibilities of the Convention according to the measure of grace and wisdom which I might receive from the Great Head of the Church and God of the oppressed. I have been necessarily absent most of this month at the East, and returning this morning find a notice of our Committee (American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society,) appointing me a delegate with Judge Jay and Prof. Whipple to attend your Convention, but I am in consequence of other duties utterly unable to meet the appointment or your kind invitation.

I regret also that I cannot in season give you any views which I have in form on the subjects involved, as requested in your letter, for want of the necessary time. I cannot, however, refrain from expressing my hope that your

deliberations will result in action suited to the exigency of the times, for the purity of the Church and the deliverance of the slave.

One of the ways to accomplish so great good, is (next to faithful preaching of the word of God,) to admonish those brethren, churches, ecclesiastical or benevolent institutions, who sustain directly or indirectly, the sins of slavery and caste. If, after admonition, rebuke and entreaty, impenitence still remains, where direct acts of discipline in a more emphatic manner are within the province of the churches, faithfulness to the souls of such requires such action, and even excommunication may be required if possible to deliver them from the snare and to bring them to repentance.

Where we have no such duty arising from the want of jurisdiction, it becomes the duty of Christian Churches to cease, after appropriate labor, and if unavailing, to hold such relations as imply fellowship as with those walking in gospel order,—to protest, withdraw and cease such intercourse as implies approbation or a sense of safety to either party. There can be no safety to either if holiness is not "followed" and if sin is not chastised.

The principle above stated you can adapt to many cases not necessarily named now. You have some of you at least acted upon it in various circumstances. When in each case we shall have done all that is required by personal labor with parties, or in the several connections sustained by us, before entire separation, must be judged of by each in view of the intelligence and spirit of those who are engaged in slaveholding, apologize for the sin or treat with cruel neglect or contempt in Church or State their colored brethren. The Convention will no doubt adopt some principles, and to decide what in their judgment will be the Christian modes of action in various cases.

It requires great firmness for small minorities to protest against sin in the churches, and it may be that some have separated from churches retaining slavery before they had fully discharged their duty to their brethren. It is also true that more have remained in such churches, and failing to carry out their convictions to their brethren, have at length hardened their own hearts by neglect, and are worse than lost to the cause of humanity and a pure Christianity. I have looked with great interest to the results of this year on the cause of freedom and a pure Christianity. How deeply we ought to deplore the fact that so many of our members need provoking to love and to good works, and how earnestly we should seek the Spirit of God to aid us in this great cause and in all the duties of life!

Very few seem to have a just sense of the ordeal the Church is passing through, and *each member*, from present political struggles and doctrines, in regard to constitutional obligations asserted by statesmen and others in high places. The atheistic sentiment of obligation to aid in the recovery of fugitive slaves will take with some (I hope few) professing Christians in the free States, and formalists will join in the worship of the leaders who have lost their humanity and would brutalize the whole country by the extension of slavery, and the endorsement of the most anti-christian and satanic doctrines ever promulgated in any country. See that you give warning to all Christian professors of the true trial of faith in this day of our political and Christian history. May you be aided from on high in all your deliberations and acts, and with such wisdom and such a spirit that none can resist the truth and the power of your expressed and determined convictions.

With love and hope for the church and the slave, I am truly yours,

SIMEON S. JOCELYN.

From Geo. Fisher, of Clermont Co., Ohio.

West Woodville, Clermont Co., Ohio, April 13, 1850.

Gentlemen: Your notice for the call of the Anti-Slavery Convention, has been received. I would be pleased to attend the Convention, but my health will not permit. I hope that much good will result from the deliberations of the Convention, and that many may be lead to believe that slavery should be condemned by all good citizens. In my opinion, the Convention should appoint a committee to call the attention of the State Convention, that meets in May, to revise our Constitution, to the wrongs of slavery, and to insist on justice being extended alike to all.

Yours, very respectfully, GEO. FISHER.

From Lewis Woodson, Pittsburgh, Pa.

PITTSBURGH, April 15, 1850.

Gentlemen: Your note of the 15th ult., inviting me to attend the Christian Anti Slavery Convention, in Cincinnati, on the 17th inst., came duly to hand, and it would give me much pleasure to comply with your invitation, but circumstances will not admit of it.

The object of your Convention is a good one, and the time at which it is to be held most opportune.

That slavery should exist in the Church, is a most intolerable abuse. No two institutions could be more unlike each other than Slavery and Christianity. View them in any light we may, they are a perfect contrast. There is not a virtue, not a grace in Christianity, whose opposite may not be found in Slavery. How, then, can they be made to maintain a consonant and co-equal existence? The thing is self-evidently absurd.

A Christianity without humanity, without benevolence, without mercy, without justice, is no Christianity at all. It is a libel upon the character of true Christianity and the examples and teachings of its Divine Author. His life was spent in doing good to the *bodies*, as well as the souls of men; in rendering them *happy on earth*, as well as preparing them for heaven. * * * The great Author of Christianity never intended that slavery * * should become a part and parcel of it. The example which he set, the precepts which he uttered, the GREAT PRINCIPLES which he laid down, show that this was not his intention. On the contrary, if they were reduced to practice and fully carried out, they would extirpate slavery from the earth.

The removal of slavery from the Church, is the appropriate work of Christian men. Infidels cannot do it. Their meddling with the vices of the Church, has a tendency to make her cling to them.

The time of the Convention, as I have said, is most opportune. The nation is agitated. Light is called for, and it is the duty of the Church to give it. God has made his Church the light of the world,—the salt of the earth. It is the source of knowledge on all questions of morals and piety: and when men would know what they should believe and practice in reference to their present and eternal happiness, they should enquire of the Church. In the Church is deposited that moral salt which is to save the world from moral putrefaction; but if this salt lose its savor, how then can the world be saved?

It is a principle in natural things, that the value and efficacy of every article is in proportion to its purity. Hence, the purer the Church is, the more valuable and efficacious she will be in promoting the happiness and salvation of the world.

The purification of the Church I have long desired to see; for I know that the day in which it is cast out of the Church, is the day of its destruction.

That God may preside over the deliberations of your Convention, and conduct to the best of conclusions, is my most humble and devout prayer.

LEWIS WOODSON.

From Hon. J. C. Hornblower, Chief Justice of New Jersey.

NEWARK, N. J., April 17, 1850.

Gentlemen: The circular, calling a Christian Anti-Slavery meeting, or Convention, at Cincinnati, with your note addressed to me, appended to it, was received by me in due course of mail, and would have been responded to long ere this, but for circumstances not under my control. Necessary absence from home during part of the time, and a somewhat severe illness for several days, have prevented my writing to you till this time: and now I fear it is too late for this letter to reach you before the meeting of the Convention. Fully sympathizing in the general sentiments and feelings expressed in the circular, it rejoiced my heart to learn by it that the crying sin of slavery in the Church of Christ was beginning to arrest the attention of individual ministers and private Christians of different evangelical denominations: for, from what I have read and experienced, I have long since despaired of any manly, honest, decisive and useful action on the subject by any of our general conventions, assemblies, or other organized ecclesiastical bodies.

In speaking of the connection of slavery with the Church of Christ, we have nothing to do with the "compromises" of our national and political constitution. Thanks

be to the Great Head of the Church, in this country, it is a free and independent Church. The government may tolerate, extend, foster, legalize and perpetuate slavery, with all its woes, as a secular or political institution; but it cannot impose it on the Church, nor compel her to admit slaveholders to her membership or communion. We, therefore, as Christian Churches, are without all excuse for tolerating slavery within her sacred pales.

I should be very happy to meet with and mingle in the deliberations of the proposed Convention; but my advanced age, the great distance and other circumstances, forbid. You say something in your note of my addressing a letter, (in case of my non-attendance,) which I would be willing to have published. Now my dear sir, I have not had time to write such a letter. Even when I have time for deliberation, such is my hatred of slavery, in all its forms and effects, and such the strength of my convictions of its utter inconsistency with enlightened and sanctified Church membership, that I hardly dare trust myself to speak or write on the subject. Suffice it, then, to say, and so far I am willing it should be known, as far as my humble name has ever been heard or lisped in this country, that I am with you and your friends on this subject, in heart and feeling: yes, if I live, I will, in spirit and in prayer, be present at your Convention, and may the Great Head of the Church preside over your deliberations and conduct you to blessed results.

Very respectfully, Rev'd. Sir, your friend and servant,

JOS. C. HORNBLOWER.

From the Rev. Samuel Aaron, Norristown, Pa.

NORRISTOWN, Pa., April 19, 1850.

Gentlemen: I received from you a letter some weeks since, urging me to attend the Convention to be held in Cincinnati, on the 17th inst. This is out of my power. You also requested my views of the measures proper to be taken by the Convention. For such advice I have felt myself incompetent; especially unable to suggest any improvement upon the ideas sketched in the circular you sent me. * * * I can see at present no improvement in the organic action of the various religious denominations, and I strongly apprehend that an extensive secession from them on the part of their conscience-enlightened and scrupulous members will ere long be found indispensable. Secession is always attended with much misunderstanding among nominal brethren; much sacrifice of property and peace, that is "quiet," on the part of the seceders; but, "come out of her, my people, and be ye separate, saith the Lord," is surely intended to encourage God's children in leaving corrupt organizations. And his repeatedly trying of them in the fire to work off the dross, is emblematic of secession. A bad religious organism, is perhaps better than none at all; the superstition that leads men to apprehend accountability, is better than downright atheism; but every religious tree, even that planted by our Divine Savior, has needed that its best fruits should be plucked and planted in a new soil, that the liveliest branches should be grafted into a new stock. If the figure is good for nothing, the fact is true, that the best Christians of all time have been a little flock, selected by God's discipline from the mass, and moving on with some tribulation towards His final rest. * * * *

I solemnly believe that if the main body of professed Christians and Clergy continue, as now, to justify slavery, it must become the imperative duty of anti-slavery Christians to leave them and declare non-fellowship. Why cast off the severely tempted slave-holder and take to our bosom their gratuitous apologists?

Yours, &c., SAMUEL AARON.

From the Orleans County, (N. Y.) Anti-Slavery Society.

At a meeting of the Orleans County Anti-Slavery Society, held at Eagle Harbor, N. Y., on the 10th inst., it was resolved that the following address be forwarded to your Convention, which is to assemble in Cincinnati on the 17th inst.

SAMUEL SALISBURY, *Chairman.*

AMOS S. SAMSON, *Secretary.*

Dear Brethren: Your call for a Christian Convention is before us, and we, your brethren, heartily sympathize and concur with you in the reasons set forth in the said call. We are not ignorant that the laws sustain the system of slaveholding and its supposed interests. The love of idleness, power, and the base passions engendered by it, all contribute to its support. Yet after all, we believe that the most effectual support it receives, and the most direct interference with all attempts at reformation, is the quietus given to the conscience in the toleration the system receives from the American Churches. To this cause we attribute the fact why the literary and religious publications of the day are mutilated and made to succumb to the dictation of the slaveholders. The Sabbath School Union, at the suggestion of a southern Vice President, erased from their catalogue a stereotyped book of sixteen years standing, entitled "Jacob and his Sons," because it contained a definition of American Slavery.

The Tract Society, Episcopal Methodist, Presbyterian,) the Harpers and other publishers, have erased sentences and cut whole chapters that described slavery from books they were republishing, and refused to publish any thing tending to rebuke slaveholding. The oldest and most numerous Missionary Societies are lending their support and influence to this abomination. Yet they tell us this is the Gospel that is to abolish slavery, and give to the world its Millennium, for the Church demands that its removal be left to her control and guidance. The Anti-Slavery enterprise the body of the Church derides as superfluous, or denounces as an unlawful and unwarrantable interference with her prerogatives. She brands it as infidel, and warns the people to beware of it.

Knowing as we do that the course thus pursued by most of the Churches has a direct tendency to hide transgression and cover iniquity, can we innocently go to the communion, give our support and fellowship to those who do these things? We think we cannot, without being partakers of their sins. Is not the act of Christian communion with the oppressor, or any one else, an endorsement of his known character? Is not the act of communion with one, saying we take pleasure in his character? When we commune with Christ, our Head, do we not commune with each other also? Then, if we personally hold no slaves, yet if we commune with those who do, and support and voluntarily unite with an organization that holds slaves, do we not show by our acts, that we take pleasure in those that do? Can Christ take pleasure in any who knowingly lives in the practice of unrighteousness? To ask these questions is to answer them. But thanks to our blessed Savior, he has given us instruction on this momentous subject, and not left us to grope our way in the dark. First, then, an effort must be made to reclaim the wandering brother or organization to which we belong, if it has not been done. "Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them," more than intimates that fellowship is incompatible with reproof.

Secondly, we believe that when a brother or organization has deliberately made up his mind and expressed it, to continue in what we know and is acknowledged, by most professors, to be a heinous sin in the sight of God, the command is imperative on us, "come out from among them my people, that ye be not partakers of their sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues."

We cannot set aside this command with impunity, by believing that there are some in the Church which we leave, for whom we have charity as Christians; for we can find no authority in God's word, thus to extend our charity and continue in an organization, that we know is daily living in the practice of a damning sin, and that, too, after sixteen or eighteen years labor to reform them. Much instruction on this subject, may be gathered from the history God has given in the Old Testament, in relation to our fallen race. "Noah was a just man, and perfect in his generation, and Noah walked with God, and the earth was filled with *violence*. And God looked upon the earth and behold it was corrupt, for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth. And God said the end of all flesh is come before me, for the earth is filled with *violence*, through them, and behold I will destroy them with the earth." In the above passage, is not wresting from man his rights expressed by the word violence, made emphatic by its repetition in which that form of wickedness is singled out to constitute the reason of God's determination, to cut off the inhabitants of the earth, reserving only the family of one who could be characterized as a just man, that regarded the equal rights of his neighbor. What were the plagues visited on the Egyptians, but an expression of God's everlasting abhorrence of the sin of slaveholding. Again, "the God of Heaven, as in mercy to man, caused Mount Sinai to quake, and amid thunderings and lightnings God wrote with his own finger the tables of his law, his eternal orders for men to obey in all coming ages, which, if obeyed, the crime which shook Egypt to its center would never again occur." The prophets, also, have denounced their heaviest woes against the oppressor.

It costs us but little to profess to love and honor God. It brings on us no derision or contempt. Our relatiohs to our fellow men, place us in very different circumstances. We see them oppressed, crushed, persecuted, and branded with infamy, prejudice may have cast them out from the kind regard of their fellow men, thrust down to a level of the beasts of the field. Say, brethren, what will you do for these men? Will you embrace them, study their character, condition, and stand up for their defence at the hazard of having your name cast out as evil, your interests invaded, your motives, intentions, and benevolent exertions, held up to scorn and derision? We will. But in doing it, we feel it would be inconsistent to fellowship the oppressor or his apologist.

May God give you wisdom to arrive at such conclusions in your deliberations as shall be for His glory and the good of man.

From Mr. Lewis Tappan.

New York, April 13, 1850.

Gentlemen: Did not the approaching anniversary of the *American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society* require my services here, I should gladly accept your invitation to attend the Christian Anti-Slavery Convention, to be held in Cincinnati, this month. Having been requested, in case of non-attendance, to communicate my views in writing, I will do so; but circumstances oblige me to do it hastily.

The fact that out of fifteen gentlemen who signed the Call, twelve were clergymen, representing eight different denominations of Christians, and that the Call has been responded to, as I learn, by nearly two thousand persons, living in different parts of the country, is, of itself, sufficient evidence that the time has fully arrived when such a Convention should be held. Tens of thousands of Christians, in the free States, and a considerable number in the slave States, are, I doubt not, anxiously and prayfully considering what is their duty, as members of the Church of Christ, with regard to American Slavery. That the Father of Lights will vouchsafe His presence and illumination, and lead the Convention to wise and scriptural results, is my earnest prayer.

The Church, at the North, generally believe that Slavery is a social, politica, and moral evil; but they think, as do Northern politicians, that they have very little to do with it. "It is a Southern institution," say they, "and beyond the expression of individual opinions, we ought not to meddle with it." A small part of the Church, at the South, also, have the same opinion of slavery, and yet do not attempt much for its removal, while no inconsiderable part defend it as a Bible institution.

Very few, either at the South or North, except professed abolitionists, believe that slaveholding is a SIN. What are called the *abuses* of the system, they allow is sinful; but they reject the statement that Slavery is a sin *per se*. Abolitionists, it is presumed, without exception, believe that the abuses of Slavery are inseperable from the system: that if an end should be put to these abuses, the system itself would cease. And many intelligent, and nominally Christian slaveholders, have acknowledged that Slavery cannot be maintained independently of these abuses, though, in such instances, they do not call them abuses, but necessary evils. There is no intelligent and honest man, it is believed, who has attentively considered the subject, but allows that the maintenance of Slavery in this country imperatively requires the exercise of force to the last extremity, and the prohibition of learning to read and write as a general rule, while the separation of families and the subjugation of the females in all respects to the wills of the slaveholders, are considered unavoidable concomitants.

When the proof is demanded that slaveholding, under all circumstances, is sinful, we need only to refer to Exodus, 21 chap. 16 v: "He that stealeth a man and selleth him, or if he be found in his hand, he shall surely be put to death," where stealing, selling, and holding a man are put on a level, and in each case the penalty was the same—*death;* and to 1st Tim., 1st chap., 9 and 10 verses: "Knowing this that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, ... for MEN STEALERS." Even the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, in 1818, when that body was more free from party influences than it is at present, solemnly declared Slavery to be a sin against God. But now, ministers in that Church, and of other denominations, abound, who assert that Slavery, in the sense in which the term is generally understood, existed in the Old Testament times, and that Christ and his apostles did not denounce it.

In reply to such reasoners it may be said—1. If slaveholding or man-stealing is forbidden, both in the Old and New Testaments, as has been shown, texts that *seem* to allow it must be construed in accordance with, and not in opposition to the clear prohibitions. 2. Hebrew servitude, and servitude as it existed in the time of our Savior, were quite different from American Slavery. In the time of Moses, the heathen sold their services to the Jews for a limited period; and in the time of Christ, slaves were treated with only the same barbarity that their masters were allowed to exercise toward their

own children, and the enslaved had then many privileges that are denied to slaves in modern times. 3. It is quite a different thing for men who profess to reverence God, to act in the nineteenth century of the Christian dispensation as those professing similar regard to the divine Being did 3000 or even 1800 years ago, either under the Mosaic or Christian dispensations, even if it can be proved, as it can not, that in those remote and semi-barbarous ages, slavery as known to this age existed.

Holding Slavery to be a social, political and moral evil, and also a sin *per se*, what is our duty in relation to it, as members of Churches, and disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ? Here I beg leave to state, as concisely as I can, some of the duties that in my judgment devolve upon all, and especially upon Christian abolitionists, in relation to the gigantic sin of American Slavery. And I do this with great deference to my brethren who meet with you in council to consider this important subject.

1. We should have a high standard of personal holiness. Reprovers, it has been said, should have clean hands. Therefore, in our domestic, social, business and religious relations, we ought scrupulously to conform to all the requirements of the gospel, and reflect in all our conduct the image of its Divine founder. In our tempers, modes of living, diligence in business, and moderation in the possession of property, we should be thorough and consistent Christians. So far as we can, we should promote the overthrow of sectarianism in theory and practice, and endeavor to unite all the sincere followers of Christ in Church fellowship.

2. We ought not to continue in Church relations where we cannot have freedom of speech and action in regard to the subject of Slavery; where slaveholders are allowed to preach or administer the ordinances; where delegates are sent to ecclesiastical bodies that forbid freedom of speech and action on the subject of Slavery; where members are received, as a matter of course, from slaveholding Churches; where certificates are given to members to unite themselves with slaveholding Churches; or where discipline is not exercised in relation to slaveholding members, as well as all other moral delinquents, on the gospel principle of leading them to repentance and reformation.

3. We ought not, I conceive, to continue in membership with any religious Society, Missionary, Bible, Tract, Temperance or Sunday School Association, where freedom of speech and action on the subject of Slavery does not exist, and where slaveholding is not viewed as a sinful relation, and in all proper ways discountenanced as a social, political, and moral evil.

4. When Providence casts our lot where we cannot attend a congregation which is free from the delinquencies above mentioned, we should, after faithful admonition and labor in vain with such Churches, associate with Christian brethren nearest to us in maintaining the worship of God, and religious instruction in a school-house, or other convenient place, until we are able to erect a Church edifice, have regular preaching and the administration of the ordinances of the Gospel. We should also unite with kindred minds in Missionary, Bible, Tract, Temperance and Sunday School labors, where anti-slavery associations of this character exist.

5. Neither ought we to continue in any political party that adopts slaveholders as candidates for office—that sanctions Slavery—that consents that the General Government should sanction, uphold or extend it—that does not put forth its energies to deliver the country from its extension and perpetuity—that does not, in every legitimate way, act on the principle, "Righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people."

6. Christian abolitionists should exercise the privilege of voting for civil rulers and representatives, but give their suffrages only for those who are known to be opposed to slavery, root and branch, and who are men of good moral character, and qualified to fill the offices for which they are designated.

7. We should see to it that our children are not instructed by pro-slavery teachers, either in the primary, academical, or theological seminaries, and that before leaving the parental roof they understand the doctrines of both the divine and civil governments in reference to the practical duties of life.

8. We should discourage our children from residing in Slave States for literary, professional, mercantile, agricultural, or mechanical purposes, and

especially do all we can to restrain them from forming family or business connexions with slaveholders.

9. Northern merchants should instruct their attorneys on no account to take mortgages on slaves as security for debts, or on execution, as many have done, not excepting Christian abolitionists.

10. Northern Christians should not give money to the American Tract Society while it refuses to publish tracts on the sinfulness of American Slavery, nor to the American Sunday School Union while it drops from its catalogue, in compliance with Southern dictation, books containing definitions of American Slavery; nor to the American Home Missionary Society while it sustains ministers to preach to slaveholding Churches with lips sealed as to the subject of Slavery, and admit slaveholders to Church privileges; nor to the Seaman's Friend Society so long as it manifests a want of sympathy for northern sailors imprisoned in southern ports merely on account of their complexion.

Such are some of the principles that should, I humbly conceive, guide every Christian abolitionist in the land. In a time of degeneracy, like the present, when members of Churches are hardly distinguishable in their social, political, and business relations, from men who make no profession of religion; when politicians are often in advance of professing Christians in regard to political conduct; when ministers of the gospel are ignorant of or shrink from the inculcation of Bible truths on the subject of Slavery; when Slavery finds a sanctuary in the Church; when important ecclesiastical bodies treat abolitionism as the worst kind of heresy; when the benevolent and religious associations of the country are conducted, as well as the legislative bodies, under the influence of Slavery, it behooves all who believe in the great doctrine of the equality of man, in democratic principles of government, and in the impartial and holy freedom of the Gospel to maintain high and uncompromising principles, and to carry them out, fearlessly and consistently, into daily practice, at all hazards, but with Christian forbearance and meekness.

With Christian regard, I remain yours respectfully,

LEWIS TAPPAN.

From Arnold Buffum, of New York.

New York, 3d mo. 12th, 1850.

Dear Friends: It would give me great pleasure to meet my brethren in a Christian Anti-Slavery Convention, especially where the subject to be considered is that of the individual responsibility of members of organized bodies professing to be the followers of Him who came "to preach deliverance to the captives, and to set at liberty them that are bound," which bodies neglect to exert their combined influence for the abolition of a system which converts a large portion of our own countrymen into despots, and a still larger portion into slaves. But as circumstances render it impracticable for me to commune with you in person, I will express in a few words some of the kindling emotions of my soul.

I desire to thank God, that by the powerful impressions of His Holy Spirit, He has brought some to realize our individual obligation, to repudiate the doctrine of *non-intervention*, as exhibited in the character of the by-passing priest and Levite; and to labor to carry out in living practice, the principle inculcated in the story of the Good Samaritan,—that He has given us a timely warning to avoid the penalty of inaction, by the statement of the case of the rich man, who clothed in purple and fine linen, and faring sumptuously every day, neglected the suffering condition of poor Lazarus, who was lying at his gate full of sores, desiring the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table. * *

God has awakened in the hearts of his devoted children a strong conviction of their individual duty to remember them that are in bonds as bound with them; and to labor with untiring firmness to produce that correction of the public sentiment which will break every yoke and let the oppressed go free. He has impressed our minds with the solemn truth, that "the wicked shall be turned into hell, with all the nations that forget God, *for* the *needy* shall not always be forgotten, the expectation of the *poor* shall not perish forever." He has brought us to realize that it would be criminal to violate His sacred injunction, "Thou shalt not deliver unto his master the servant that is escaped from

his master unto thee, but he shall dwell with thee in the place which he shall choose, in one of thy gates which it liketh him best, thou shalt not oppress him." We have been led most seriously to meditate on the declaration of the Messiah, that in the day of judgment so rapidly approaching us all, the ground of justification will be, having administered kindness and mercy to the hungry, the thirsty, the stranger, the naked, the sick, and the imprisoned; and on the other hand, the cause that will be assigned for the condemnation of any soul will be the omission of acts of benevolence, humanity and love, to the needy and the distressed. What shall we then say to those with whom we have been associated in religious fellowship, who oppose all active participation in the efforts now in progress, for the restoration of their God-given rights to our enslaved countrymen?

When I take into consideration the fact so evident throughout the world, that the popular customs in every community, constitute the surrounding influences in the formation of the character and sentiment of each succeeding generation, I can readily concede, that persons born and trained up to maturity of character, in the midst of a slaveholding community, may be so indoctrinated in aristocratic sentiments as to believe that there is one class made to rule and another to serve; persons so educated may become Christians, and still remain in darkness as to the duty of emancipating their enslaved brethren. But with regenerated men who have been trained under favorable influences, where the principle of equality of rights is universally inculcated, and where all are free, the case is entirely different. Every honest man, who has been trained in a land of liberty, when he becomes a Christian, will feel himself called to the labor of opening his mouth for the dumb; he will know it to be his duty to plead for the suffering millions who are not permitted to plead for themselves; he will not dare to "settle down in the quiet," while under the jurisdiction of his own sovereignty, unborn millions are doomed to hopeless bondage, degradation, ignorance and woe. He knows that oppression is a violation of God's law, and that for him to neglect the cause of the oppressed, is like burying his talent in the earth; he knows that it must place him on the list of those who gave no meat to the hungry, drink to the thirsty, clothing to the naked, neither relieved those who were unjustly imprisoned. I consider, therefore, that an organized church in a non-slaveholding State which does not co-operate with the friends of humanity, in the labor of so converting the public sentiment as to work the deliverance of the oppressed from bondage, is more guilty in the sight of God, than are the churches in the South, where the oppressor and the oppressed unite in devotional services, and commune at the same table. The church of the North holds in its hands the destiny of our land; it has the power under God to make it a land of freedom or a land of slaveholders and slaves. If unborn millions are to live and die in slavery, it is because the professed followers of Christ in the non-slaveholding States neglect to come up to the work of delivering our nation from this crying sin.

I desire that an address may be prepared, and sent to every christian professor, presenting to their understanding and conscience these fundamental truths, in such clear and forcible manner, as may bring all to unite as one common brotherhood, on the platform of that pure and undefiled religion which leads to commiseration with the needy and the distressed.

May the time soon come when professing Christians shall all realize that this is the only platform on which we can enjoy a well grounded hope of a glorious immortality and eternal life; and thus may the year of jubilee be brought to the generation of the enslaved, who are our fellow pilgrims, journeying side by side with us to the eternal world,—may we go with them to Abraham's bosom, having relieved them from oppression and wrong, and may we there unite with them in the enjoyment of that liberty with which Christ makes all his children free.

Affectionately, your brother in the bonds of the oppressed,
ARNOLD BUFFUM.

From Rev. J. Rankin, of the Free Presbyterian Church, Ripley, Ohio.

RIPLEY, April 13, 1850.

To the President of the Christian Anti-Slavery Convention:

Dear Sir: Not having an opportunity of being at the Convention over which you preside, I desire, through you to express to the members of that body my cordial approbation of the objects for which they have convened. One of

which is, that of considering the connexion of the American Church with the sin of slaveholding. And another, that of adopting measures for freeing her from the sin resulting from such connection.

The connection of the American Church with slaveholding is such as gives to the system of Slavery its principal support. She is the "pillar and ground" of Slavery, as the apostolic church was "of the truth." She gives to it the highest sanction possible. A large proportion of her ministers, her elders and her private members, are slaveholders. They buy and sell and hold human beings as if beasts of the field. Among her ministers and members are found the ablest advocates of slaveholding. Graham, Junkin and Hodge, professed ministers of the gospel, stand in the front rank of those who advocate the rightfulness of slaveholding. No small amount of the best talent of the American Church has been employed to show that the Scriptures justify slaveholding, and that of course it is consistent with Christian character and profession. The Church, by admitting slaveholders to her communion and to her sacred offices, and by suffering her ministers to teach that Slavery is a Bible institution, and fully sustained by the sacred oracles, has done more than all the world beside, to reconcile to it the consciences of men; to make it honorable, and render it permanent. We may truly affirm that the American Church is responsible for the existence of Slavery in this nation, and for the consequent ignorance, vice, cruelty, blood and crime. It may be confidently asserted, that such a system of wickedness could not have taken root and grown up under the faithful application of the gospel. And if the Church would now unitedly lift her voice against it, no power on earth could secure its existence. Under the light and heat of the gospel rays, it would pass away as darkness before the rising sun. In a republic like this, the Church can, by unitedly bringing her influences to bear upon it, abolish any wicked system of legislation. And consequently, the Church is responsible for all the unrighteous and oppressive laws in this nation.

What, then, can be hoped for the Church while she lies under all the blood and crime of this government, under the oppressions of which millions have perished, and three millions now are bought and sold as if they were mere animals; the rights of marriage are abolished; husbands and wives, parents and children, are torn asunder, and separated never to meet again on earth! With little exception, they have no Sabbaths, no churches, no Bibles, and by heavy penalties they are prohibited from being taught to read a sentence in the word of life!

To devise measures to liberate the Church from a connection involving her in guilt and crime so horrible, is an object worthy of the highest efforts of the nobelst minds, and consequently it does not become me to dictate to a large and respectable body what measures shall be adopted; I desire simply to make a few suggestions for consideration.

1st. Should there not be arrangements made for a systematic circulation of well written tracts on the sin and responsibility of the Church in relation to Slavery?

2d. Is it not the duty of all Christians to separate from all church organizations that admit slaveholders to communion?

3d. Ought there not to be an evangelical alliance formed by the several Christian bodies that exclude slaveholders from communion? And should they not hold a convention annually to devise measures for operating against the sin of slaveholding?

May the Father of the Universe preside over the Convention and lead it to make rightful decisions.

JOHN RANKIN.

EXPLANATION.

The Committee of Publication have not been able to avail themselves of the labors of the Reporter employed by the Convention, for two reasons:

1. The insertion of his report, they found, would swell the expense of this pamphlet entirely beyond what the funds placed at their disposal, were sufficient to meet.

2. A part of the Reporter's manuscript, through some miscarriage, has never reached the Committee.

ERRATA.—On page 29, for *Rev. S. K. Smeac* read *Rev. S. K. Snead.*

On p. 34, near the top, for REAL *religious instruction*, read ORAL religious instruction.

Page 31. In justice to our Wesleyan brethren, it ought to be known that they have now *three* faithful missionaries in the Southern States, stemming the tide of slaveholding iniquity, with faithfulness and success. This fact did not occur to the writer when he penned the sentence respecting Mr Fee.